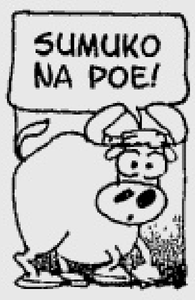
Poe presidential bid spooks business community

Story below, Col. 2

'Our country will go to the dogs'



By F. O. Zuasola
PDI Mindanao Bureau

MATI, Davao Oriental—There goes the Philippines.

Councilor Noel Sibala of Mati, Davao Oriental, summed up

OUR COUNTRY/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Cory: Ninoy and I made a very good team

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

FORMER President Corazon "Cory" Aquino marked the 71st birth anniversary of her late husband, Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. reminiscing about their inadvertent reversal of roles during martial law and how this brought out the leader in her.

CORY/ A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Thursday, November 27, 2003 ★★ 58 pages / 6 sections / vol. 18 / no. 352 P15 website: www.inq7.net

'Da King' is running

Roco glad, GMA glum: I will not talk politics

By Dona Pazzibugan and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

THE REACTIONS of President Macapagal-Arroyo and former Sen. Raul Roco to the declaration of actor Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday that he was running for president were a study in contrast.

Asked in Nueva Ecija to comment on Poe's announcement, Ms Macapagal was in her "mataray" mode and curtly said, "I don't talk politics."

But Roco, also a presidential aspirant, welcomed Poe's declaration. Roco said Poe's candidacy would divide the opposition votes, to the actor's and Sen. Panfilo Lacson's detriment.

"In a democracy it's good to have many choices. But in reality, he'll cannibalize Lacson's votes and he'll also be taking away votes from GMA," Roco said in an interview.

Roco also believes that Ms Macapagal is bound to lose votes from the "masa" (masses) or class E sector in favor of Poe.

The former education secretary said he was confident that he was leading in the A, B, C and D economic classes as well as among the youth. Asked what he thought of criticisms about Poe's lack of qualifications and experience, Roco said it was up to the actor to defend himself.

With Ms Macapagal refusing to comment on Poe's announcement, her spokesperson Ignacio Bunye issued a statement on the Poe issue. "We welcome Mr. Ronnie Poe to the world of politics. We wish him all the best," Bunye said.

Bunye's statement was apparently meant to highlight Poe's lack of experience in politics, a theme that the President and Malacañang had been propagating in speeches and at press briefings.

Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats executive director Joey Rufino took a swipe at Poe's qualifications as a presidential candidate. "The gift of acting

ROCO/ A10

REALITY SHOW. No more cuts, this is for real as Philippine movie action king Fernando Poe Jr., with his wife Susan Roces by his side, formally announces his bid to run for president. ROGER MARGALLO

FPJ: Time for big decision

By Christine O. Avendano, Michael Lim Ubac and Carlito Pablo

FERNANDO Poe Jr. yesterday threw his hat into the 2004 presidential ring, ending months of speculation on his political plans.

The actor's declaration to run made him a contender for No. 1 against President Macapagal-Arroyo, former Education Secretary Raul Roco and Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

A political strategist of Sen. Loren Legarda told the INQUIRER that an FPJ-Loren tandem should be expected in the 2004 polls. The source, who asked not to be named, said Legarda had accepted Poe's invitation to be his running mate.

The source said Senate Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III, Poe's spokesperson and campaign manager, knew about the possible tandem because he was privy to the talks between the Poe and Legarda camps.

The source described the tandem as "formidable" and said it could easily defeat President Macapagal-Arroyo and her running mate.

Asked to confirm, Sotto said tersely: "We want her [in our ticket]."

But Legarda refused to confirm or deny the supposed tandem, and reiterated that she was still in the "process of consultation."

But she said that "anything is possible in politics," and that "there have been invitations" for her to run as vice president.

The announcement of Poe, 64, was simple: "I am Fernando Poe Jr., and I am running for president of our country."

But he did not say that he was running under the banner of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, the largest opposition party in the country whose leaders had been wooing him for months to join the presidential race.

"We're still talking about it, but as of now I don't have any party," the *barong*-clad Poe, his actress-wife Susan Roces at his side, said at a crowded news confer-

DA KING/ A21

From mansion to apartment, to Palace?

LIKE his pal, deposed President Joseph Estrada, Fernando Poe Jr. is a dropout.

Poe dropped out of the University of the East when he was in second year high school to support his family.

"When my father died, we lost everything. From a mansion (on Del Monte Avenue in Quezon City), we moved to a small apartment also within the area," he said in a interview in 1995.

His father, Fernando Poe Sr., died in 1951 after he let rabid puppies lick his wound. A movie star, who appeared in such films as "Palaris" and "Zamboanga," Poe Sr. was the model for national artist Guillermo Tolentino's UP Oblation.

Poe is the second of six children of Poe Sr. and Elizabeth "Bessie" Kelly, an American. The surname was originally spelled "Pou" from his grandfather Lorenzo Pou, a playwright who migrated from Mallorca in Spain.

Aside from assuming the names "FPJ" and "Da King," Poe uses the names D'lanor and Ronwaldo Reyes when directing movies. Reyes is his paternal grandmother's surname.

The young Poe first worked as a messenger for a film exchange office for P18 a

FROM/ A21

What now, Ping? FPJ threatens to derail bid

By Christine O. Avendaño and Cynthia D. Balana

SEN. Panfilo Lacson is hanging in there despite Fernando Poe Jr.'s declaration that he will join the 2004 presidential race but not under any party for now.

At a news conference he called at his Makati City office shortly after Poe's announcement yesterday at the Manila Hotel, Lacson said he remained the only candidate for president of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino. And because of this, he said, he was "even more determined to go for [the presidency]."

"I have no one to contend with in the LDP. I'm the only LDP member who is vying for the top post in the May 2004 polls," Lacson said.

Apparently to remind LDP leaders who had been vocal of their support for a Poe candidacy, the senator added: "If he [Poe] is not a member of the LDP, I cannot see how he can be considered a presidential candidate of the LDP."

Lacson said LDP leaders and members should bear in mind that a non-member of the party could not take part in the nomination process.

"This will only be resorted to if there is no member-candidate for the party," he said.

WHAT NOW/ A8

Poe's Palace bid spooks business community

SOME businessmen and analysts yesterday cringed at the prospect that the country might again be ruled for the second time in six years by someone whose only claim to the nation's top job is his popularity as a movie star.

While others said they would wait and see what action star Fernando Poe Jr. had to offer to the nation, Moody's Investors Service said it might cut its debt ratings for the Philippines on concerns that rising political risk ahead of elections next year would worsen the already fragile economy.

Many businessmen are unnerved by the possibility that highly popular Poe could win in the 2004 presidential election despite his lack of political and economic experience. They also question how a movie actor and high school dropout could inspire an economy hobbled by a massive budget deficit and a battered currency.

Investors have also expressed concern over Poe's close ties to Joseph "Erap" Estrada, another movie actor whose presidency collapsed under the weight of corruption allegations in 2001.

Vic Abola, an economist at the University of Asia and the Pacific, said he was hoping Poe would not win.

"We're back to the issues of Erap. It's just the same. He (Poe) may be an honest person but that doesn't mean he won't make a mess of the economy," Abola

POE/ A10

'CHAVIT' THE MOVIE
President Macapagal watches a movie as a respite from fierce politicking and kidnappings, only to see more violence on the screen. She is sandwiched by the real Luis Singson (left) and the reel one, actor Cesar Montano, during the premiere of "Chavit" at SM Megamall. In foreground are the movie's producer, Donna Villa, and director, Carlo J. Caparas. VAL HANDUMON

Show biz folk rally round FPJ candidacy

By Armand N. Nocum and Marinel R. Cruz

JOSEPH Estrada is leading the show biz personalities announcing their all-out support for the declared presidential hopeful Fernando Poe Jr.

The ousted President said it was not easy for him to declare support for Poe, his bosom buddy and fellow actor, over Sen. Panfilo Lacson, another aspirant for the top post and also his close friend.

But "from the beginning," Estrada said, he had told Lacson that he would support the senator only if Poe would decide not to run.

"I have been honest and straightforward with [Lacson]," Estrada said by phone from his detention quarters at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal.

"I told him that if Ronnie [Poe] will

SHOW BIZ/ A10

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/11/27/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

Checkpoints set up all over RP

But it's no martial law, just anti-crime drive, NCRPO chief says

By Tina Santos, Christian Esguerra, Edson Tandoc Jr. and Leila Salaverria

FOLLOWING the directive of the President, the Philippine National Police has set up several checkpoints nationwide in a bid to thwart criminal activities in the wake of the alarming rash of bank robberies and kidnappings, particularly in the metropolis.

National Capital Region Police (NCRPO) chief deputy director Gen. Reynaldo Velasco, however, assured the public that the setting up of checkpoints is not a prelude to the declaration of Martial Law in the country.

He also guaranteed that people's rights will not be violated in the course of enforcing the checkpoints. "Respect for human rights is paramount," he told reporters yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo earlier ordered the PNP to set up checkpoints in key areas in Metro Manila to check the alarming rise in crime incidents, especially kidnappings.

In Metro Manila, where most of the criminal incidents happened, the police started setting up "mobile" checkpoints Tuesday night.

The "mobile" checkpoints will patrol crime-prone areas in the metropolis on a 24-hour basis and will be on call in case of any untoward incident, particularly bank heists and kidnappings, according to Velasco.

Kidnap-prone areas

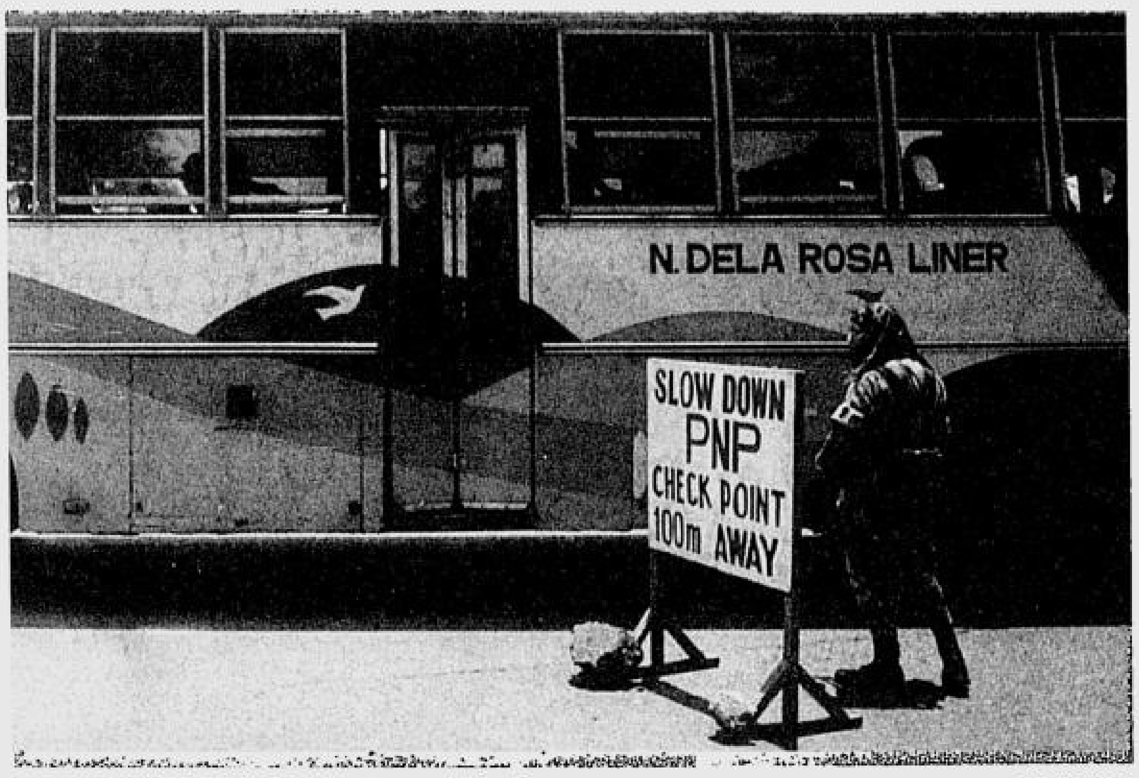
The National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force headed by Angelo Reyes will determine the areas prone to kidnappings. Reyes will brief on Monday all field commanders in Metro Manila on the government's strategies against kidnap-for-ransom gangs.

Velasco stressed that the checkpoint system has always been implemented in certain areas around the country saying it is part of the PNP's standard operational procedure.

"We have been conducting random checkpoints around the metropolis since September," the NCRPO chief said, resulting in the arrest of several criminals.

He said the system is one of the most effective preventive measures that could ultimately put a stop to the alarming upsurge of high-profile crime incidents in Metro Manila.

This month alone, at least two Chinese-Filipino kids have been kidnapped. One of them, Coca-Cola executive Betti Sy, was found dead a day after she went missing in Quezon City. The other victim, a fifth grade student who was kidnapped last week in Paco, Manila, is still in the hands of her captors.



MOBILE CHECKPOINT: Prelude to martial law?

PDI FILE PHOTO

Velasco attributed the increase in kidnappings and robberies to the dismantling of several clandestine shabu laboratories around metropolis, prompting crime syndicates to shift their activities from drug trafficking to kidnapping and robbery.

Authorities claimed the kidnappings, highlighted by the Sy kidnap-slay, and the robbery of Unionbank in Parañaque last Monday could be part of an elaborate plan to destabilize the administration.

Prone to abuse

The Chinese-Filipino community, however, fears the establishment of checkpoints in the metropolis could be abused.

Citizens Action Against Crime chair Teresita Ang-See told the INQUIRER yesterday it could provide another platform for police abuse, if not a new scheme for kidnappers.

Ang-See said in several cases, kidnappers wore uniforms and passed themselves off as police officers conducting checkpoints. This way, the kidnappers could easily flag down their targets.

She urged the police to inform motorists how to identify legitimate checkpoint officers to avoid falling prey to kidnappers. Motorists should also be advised about designated checkpoint areas so they could easily spot bogus checkpoints.

But the Western Police District said there would be no permanent locations for the checkpoints in Manila.

WPD director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong said that it would be up to the station commanders to determine where the checkpoints would be set up.

But he said these would definitely be put up in well-lighted areas and the team manning it would be headed by uniformed police officers.

Bulaong assured that motorists would not be made to get out of their vehicles at the checkpoints, saying the police would only inspect what could be seen in plain view.

Only in very special cases, he said, will a motorist or a passenger be asked to step out of his vehicle like when there is strong information that a person is a suspect in a crime, or when the vehicle has been reported carnapped or missing.

Heavily tinted vehicles and those with questionable license plates would be the priority of the inspections, he added.

GMA allays fears of civil disobedience

ANGELES CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has dispelled threats of civil disobedience by the Chinese-Filipino community already indignant over the fresh spate of kidnappings and robberies.

The President, quoting Robin Sy, president of the Chinese-Filipino Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said it was not true that the Chinese-Filipino community had called for a civil disobedience for alleged government inaction on the recent rash of kidnappings.

Ms Macapagal attended the wake for P02 Joselito Esguerra, who was killed during the gunfight between the police and the Obeles Yap kidnap gang in Dinalupihan, Bataan, on Nov. 20.

"It is not true that we are calling for a civil disobedience because that is not good for us," said Sy, who also attended the wake. "What we are simply asking for is that our government would help us."

Sy said his group was giving reward to informants of kidnap-for-ransom syndicates and to government soldiers killed or wounded in operations against kidnap groups.

Ms Macapagal reiterated the government's plan to put up checkpoints. She stressed, however, that the establishment of these checkpoints was "not the start of martial law but a renewed effort in law enforcement."

She justified the participation of the military in the fresh crackdown against heinous crimes, saying that as President she is empowered by the Constitution to mobilize the AFP against "lawless violence." *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

DOJ files motion vs Kuratong ruling

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice has filed a motion for reconsideration before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court on the dismissal of the Kuratong Baleleng charges against Sen. Panfilo Lacson and the 33 other co-accused.

The DOJ, however, asked Judge Ma. Theresa Yadao to inhibit herself from ruling on the motion due to her alleged bias for the accused in the case.

"Judge Yadao, in dismissing the criminal cases against all of the accused, seriously erred and labored under a gross misapprehension of law amounting to gross ignorance of settled jurisprudence on the matter and the overwhelming evidence on record against the 34 accused," said the DOJ's 72-page motion.

"The dismissal simply confirmed her partiality towards the accused," it added.

Yadao dismissed the 11 cases of murder against Lacson and his other co-accused on Nov. 12 after she found the government's case to be lacking in probable cause.

But the DOJ said that there is probable cause and that its evidence are strong enough to merit a conviction of the accused. It also hit Yadao for giving statements to the media that she would stand by her decision.

Yadao had alleged that the government tried to pressure her, and even offered her a position in the Sandiganbayan or the Court of Appeals, if she issued arrest warrants against the accused.

"Yet she failed to substantiate such serious accusation in violation of her duty as a public officer under (the Revised Penal Code). However, Judge Yadao's belated expose' is very revealing as such (unsubstantiated) threat may have apparently irked her and may have motivated her to decide in favor of the accused," the DOJ said.

"Judge Yadao's improper conduct, her obvious bias against the prosecution as well as statements she gave to the media on her intractable or unchangeable decision to let all the accused go with impunity are what impelled the prosecution to move for her immediate inhibition," it added.

The DOJ said it would be "an exercise in futility" to have Yadao rule on its motion since her statements to the media showed that she had foreclosed any possibility for her to change her mind.

The DOJ insisted that there is probable cause in the case against the accused and that Yadao violated the rules on the determination of probable cause when she adopted her own rules of procedure.

"She acted as a prosecutor in the determination of probable cause for the issuance of arrest warrants and yet, when issuing her finding on such determination, she converted herself into a trial court judge deciding a criminal case," the DOJ said.

"She lost sight of the doctrine of probable cause and equated it with the requirement of moral certainty for the conviction of the accused. She demanded the highest degree of evidence in determining probable cause, when all that was required was for her to apply an average man's standard of reasonable belief," it added.

The DOJ noted that forensic evidence showed that no shootout happened when the 11 suspected Kuratong Baleleng members were killed along Commonwealth Avenue on May 18, 1995.

The PNP medico-legal reports of the incidents revealed that all the victims had multiple gunshot wounds and abrasions on the wrist area "evidently indicating that no shootout occurred as their hands were tied when they were killed," the DOJ said.

Paraffin tests on the victims also showed that their hands were negative for powder burns, it added.

"In the case at bar, are 11 medico-legal reports showing ligature marks on the wrist of the victims, negative powder burns on all victims, fatal headwounds caused by gunshots including one head wound with powder burn tattooing indicating close range fire—insufficient for purposes of corpus delicti to anyone, be they lawman or lawyer, except for Judge Yadao?" the DOJ asked.

New probe of Rosebud charges ordered

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SANDIGANABAYAN has ordered the Office of the Ombudsman to conduct a "preliminary investigation" on the bribery charges filed against Police Chief Supt. Reynaldo Acop and 10 other top police officials.

The case stems from the revelations of civilian agent Mary "Rose Bud" Ong during the Senate hearings last year where Ong claimed that the officials received P3 million and 10 kilos of shabu as payment for the release of Chinese drug dealers in 1998.

The respondents were all under the Regional Intelligence and Investigation Division of the Police Regional Office 4, with Acop as commanding officer, when the alleged bribery transpired.

One of the accused, Supt. John Campos, was recently shot dead by unknown assailants. Others accused include Supt. Francisco Villaroman, Chief Ins. Julius Cesar Mana, Insp. Dennis Reed Tuvera, and Insp. Cesar Aquino.

Last year, the accused filed motions for "determination of probable cause," claiming that no preliminary investigation was conducted in their case, which was filed before the Sandiganbayan during the term of acting Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio.

Government prosecutors countered the motions by saying that the posting of P16,000 by each of the accused rendered moot and academic the issue of probable cause.

The second division of the Sandiganbayan under Associate Justice Edilberto Sandoval said, however, that it found "merit" in the motions of the accused, noting that "the charge for direct bribery was filed directly before this court without the benefit of preliminary investigation."

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BARBERS: Favored over De Castro

ERIK ARAZAS

GMA party rooting for Barbers as VP

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE RULING Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats party wants administration Sen. Robert Barbers to be the vice-presidential running mate of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the 2004 elections.

House Speaker Jose de Venecia and Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzales said that while the President has the prerogative to choose her VP, the ruling party's voice would be considered by the President, who is also its honorary chair.

Asked about Barbers' chances of getting the President's nod, De Venecia, Lakas president, said: "He's a very strong, very capable candidate. He has got a commanding lead among the political leaders and some members of civil society who are here. He seem to enjoy the overwhelming support of the party."

But Barbers, he said, would still "go through a selection process."

De Venecia and Gonzales made this disclosure during the launching of Barber's candidacy at the Westin Philippine Plaza in Pasay City.

A resolution authored by Barbers' son, Rep. Ace Barbers of Surigao, calling on Ms Macapagal to choose Barbers over Sen. Noli de Castro has been endorsed by 50 Lakas congressmen.

Ace said more Lakas members are expected to sign the resolution, which would be presented to the President next week.

Very good chance

Lakas stalwart Rep. Prospero Pichay said there was a "very, very good chance" that the position of the party would be respected by President Macapagal.

"The fact that the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker are present today means that Lakas wants the (vice presidential) candidate to come from the party," said Pichay.

In terms of geographic considerations, a GMA-Barbers ticket is a balanced one, according to Pichay. "The President is from the Luzon, and Sen. Barbers is from Mindanao. This is the first time that Mindanao is endorsing a son of Mindanao to run for a higher post."

Barbers announced his intention to seek the second highest elected position in the land before a crowd composed of Lakas members, political supporters from Mindanao and Visayas, and civil society groups.

Besides De Venecia and Gonzales, the Lakas members who trooped to the Westin Philippine Plaza included Reps. Pichay, Barbers' son Ace, Miguel Zubiri, Rudy Albano, Tony Cuenco, Ed Zialcita, Roquito Ablan, Danton Bueser, Amado Vicencio and Tony Nieva.

Muslim Mindanao Gov. Farouk Hussin and Davao Gov. Rudy del Rosario, president of the Governors' League of the Philippines, led local leaders of Mindanao in expressing support for Barbers' candidacy.

Slug it out

Running under a platform to improve the peace and order situation, Barbers, chair of the Senate Committee on Public Order and Illegal Drugs, said the resurgence of crimes and the real threats posed by the drug menace and terrorism in the country compelled him to "slug it out in the vice presidential race."

Offering his "tried and tested crime-buster" role, Barbers vowed, once elected, to declare a war against drug syndicates and other criminals.

He rallied the jampacked crowd to support him, saying the country faced two serious problems—a faltering economy and a severe lack of peace and order.

Gloria dares foes: Oust me in polls

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday challenged her political opponents to oust her from Malacañang through the elections and not through destabilization efforts.

In a statement, Ms Macapagal said: "I call upon the politicians who are inclined to inveigle or support these groups to train their sights on the forthcoming polls rather than futile destabilization. Let us resolve all political issues by the ballot rather than the gun, and give our people the peace of mind they deserve."

The President hurled the challenge as she debunked anew rumors of another military uprising four months after the Oakwood mutiny.

"The intelligence community sees no reemergence of underground groups in the command. Continuing reforms, better morale and discipline and the even handed pursuit of justice and compassion have steadily immunized the Armed Forces from the coup fever," the President said.

Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said some sectors spreading rumors of another coup and the possibility of no elections next year wanted to embarrass the administration as wobbly in the knees.

"The bottom line is they want to show that the administration is not in control but the President has shown that she is in full control of the AFP and all levers of power," Ermita said.

OOPS! SHE DID IT AGAIN

Wrong day declared for Muslim holiday

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MUSLIMS around the world celebrated Tuesday Eid'l Fitr (Feast of Ramadan), Nov. 25, to mark the end of holy fasting month of Ramadan, but not a few Filipino Muslims were left wondering why President Macapagal-Arroyo chose to celebrate their most revered date a day late.

Malacañang admitted that it made "an honest mistake" when it issued Proclamation No. 498 declaring Nov. 26 as a special nonworking day throughout the country for the observance of the Feast of Ramadan.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Malacañang even consulted Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Gov. Farouk Hussein and Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong on when the fasting month of Ramadan would end.

The proclamation stated: "The date on which the Eid-Ul-Fitre falls varies from year to year depending on the sighting of the new moon... for the year 2003, the Eid-Ul-Fitre has been determined to fall on Wednesday, Nov. 26."

Bunye said they realized the mistake only much later and it was too late to revise the proclamation.

Positive outlook

Following the festive observance of Eid'l Fitr, the country's Muslim population may find it heartening to know that Filipinos have a positive view of Islam despite the acts of violence by a few misguided members.

The research firm Social Weather Stations declared Filipinos as more tolerant than Americans after comparing the results of its May to June 2003 survey on the subject with that of the ABC News Poll done in September this year.

"One out of three Americans, just like the Filipinos, have a basic understanding of the teachings and beliefs of Islam, according to a Sept. 4 to 7, 2003 ABC News Poll," the SWS said in its report.

"Unlike Filipinos who have favorable views toward Islam, the Americans have mixed opinions, with 39 percent saying they have a favorable view compared to 38 percent who say otherwise," the research group added. "The remaining 23 percent do not have enough knowledge to give an opinion."

An SWS survey conducted on 1,200 respondents from May 28 to June 14 showed that 58 percent of Filipinos have a favorable view of Islam, an increase from just 43 percent in November 2002.

The SWS said the increase in Filipinos with a positive outlook towards Islam was evident across all geographical areas and economic classes.

Understanding Islam

"As opposed to majority of Filipinos who say Islam respects the beliefs of non-Muslim, plurality (44 percent) of Americans feel Islam does not respect the beliefs of non-Muslims," the SWS said.

According to the survey, some 62 percent of Filipinos believe Islam respects the beliefs of non-Muslims, an increase from 48 percent in November 2002.

There was a slight increase in the number of Filipinos who believe they have a basic understanding of Islam and Muslims.

Those with basic understanding of the teachings and beliefs of Islam were at 34 percent in June 2003, compared to 30 percent in November 2002.

"Basic understanding of the teachings and beliefs of Islam is higher in the national capital region and Mindanao compared to other areas, and among the upper than lower classes," the SWS said.

Some 43 percent and 40 percent of the respondents in Metro Manila and Mindanao, respectively, said they have basic understanding of Islam—much higher than the national average of just 34 percent. Respondents in the Visayas posted the lowest understanding rating with just 21 percent of respondents saying they understand the religion. *With report from Norman Bordadora*

Pinoy twins looking good

NEW YORK—Twin boys from the Philippines who are joined at the top of their heads showed no signs of brain or nerve damage from extensive surgery on their shared blood vessels, the lead surgeon said.

In the second of a series of operations that should lead to their eventual separation sometime next year, Carl and Clarence Aguirre had several major blood vessels divided and tied off during Monday's 5 1/2-hour operation at Montefiore Medical Center in New York. Surgeons also pushed apart the 19-month-old boys' brains, which were touching but not intertwined.

"From a neurological point of view, they've done really spectacular," said lead surgeon Dr. James Goodrich, after checking on the twins Tuesday morning at the pediatric intensive care unit.

Clarence, who is the smaller of the two and has a history of high blood pressure, was still on a breathing tube, which Goodrich said would be removed later Tuesday. His brother, Carl, was "moving around a little more than we would like" and had to be lightly sedated for Clarence's sake, Goodrich said.

But "both of them have been awake enough to do a neurological assessment and in both cases they look good," Goodrich said.

He said the next stage of surgery—which could result in a full separation—would probably not be performed until February to give the twins time to grow extra skin to be used when they are separated. A tissue expander, designed to be gradually inflated to stretch the skin, was inserted during Monday's operation.

Goodrich said the boys' mother, Arlene Aguirre, was "doing great, obviously happy that this part's over." *AP*

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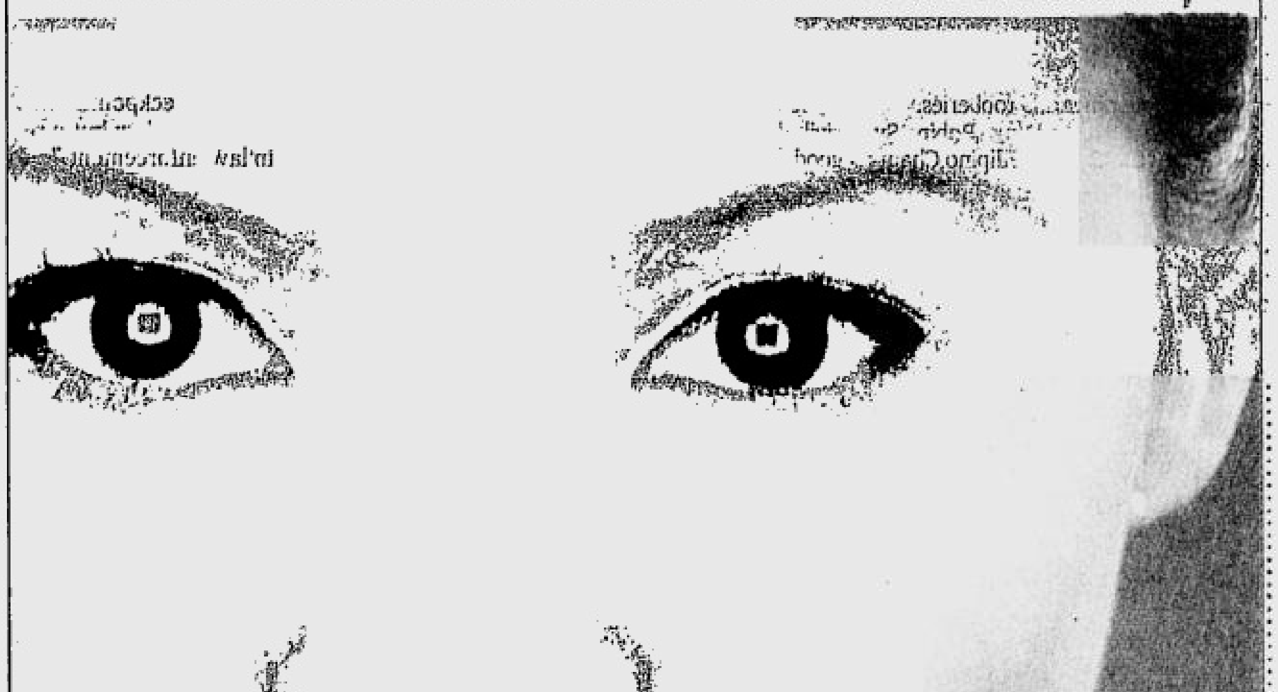

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'Our country . . .'

From page A1

his dismay over the decision of movie king Fernando Poe Jr. to run in next year's presidential race by announcing that he was quitting politics and leaving the country for good.

"It's final, I quit politics and leave this miserable country all because of the looming presidency of movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. Our country will definitely go to the dogs with FPJ as president. There is no more hope in this country," said Sibala, who is considered an outstanding council member by his peers.

Sibala is less known than other leaders of the country but he definitely gave a face to some people who do not want another actor to become president.

His announcement came as a shock to many of his supporters, mostly women.

Sibala has earned the admiration of women for championing their rights and for pushing for ordinances that outlawed certain events, such as the holding of bikini contests, which he has viewed as "exploitative of women."

Outstanding councilor

"Just because of Fernando Poe Jr. he is leaving politics? That's very shocking. He is an outstanding municipal councilor, he is the champion of the women's cause. I hope Councilor Sibala would reconsider his decision," Anna Lee Morte, an activist, said.

Sibala said his decision to quit politics was final, "unless Fernando Poe Jr. realizes the folly of his joining politics."

He even predicted that Poe would serve the presidency the way ousted President Joseph Estrada did. "He will lead this country to perdition because he will just serve the vested interests of businessman [Eduardo] Danding Cojuangco and Estrada," he said.

Sibala, who had topped past elections for municipal councilors, is not affiliated with any political party.

He advised President Macapagal-Arroyo not to pursue her election bid because with Poe in the race, "she would just eat dust."

"That's the most honorable thing for her to do so she will have a good place in our history," Sibala said.

'Running priest'

In Manila, activist priest Robert Reyes expressed similar disgust over Poe's declaration of his presidential ambition.

"He's totally unqualified and has never been exposed to politics," he said.

That Poe has managerial skills as supposedly shown by his successful movie company is "of course, part of the expected PR job," he said.

Reyes, who has been called the "running priest" for espousing social causes through running, warned of a "danger" in a Poe presidency, saying it could be a scandal-ridden term like that of Estrada.

He said similarities already showed in the known vices of the two actors, who are close friends. "If Erap [Estrada] preferred red wine, it will be San Miguel beer for FPJ," he said in jest.

He said he doubted whether Poe really decided on his own to enter politics. Either Estrada or Cojuangco succeeded in coaxing him to run, he said.

"We do not have make-believe situations like those in his action movies, where he has directors and writers to coach him. Our country has real-life problems and it's not enough that the President is good-hearted," he said.

But Reyes said that while he questioned Poe's ability, he detested the prospect of another six years under President Macapagal. "FPJ [Poe] should stay out [of politics], GMA should step out," he said.

FORMER President Corazon Aquino reminisces about the inadvertent reversal of roles she and her husband Ninoy Aquino experienced during martial law which, she said, brought out the leader in her. FILE PHOTO

Cory: Ninoy and I made a very good team

From page A1

"Pardon my immodesty, but I do believe that Ninoy and I made a very good team," said Cory, 70, at the inauguration of the Ninoy and Cory Aquino Leadership Center at the Ateneo Professional Schools in Makati on Monday.

"As many of you know, Ninoy was not the perfect husband as I was not the perfect wife, but somehow with many, many prayers, much love and dedicated efforts, we were able to bring out the best in each other," she said.

The center's launch was timed to commemorate the late senator's birth anniversary which is today, Nov. 27. Members of the Aquino family led by Tarlac Rep. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, former officials of the Aquino administration and Ateneo de Manila officials turned out for the inauguration.

Regaling the audience with anecdotes, the former President recalled how she was forced into politics when Ninoy was incarcerated during martial law.

Ninoy was arrested on Sept. 23, 1972 and detained without charges for seven years and seven months. He was allowed to undergo heart surgery in the United States after his 40-day hunger strike.

"During our three years of exile in the US, Ninoy and I would sometimes talk about his imprisonment and we were both agreed that those seven years and seven months proved to be our greatest learning experiences," recalled Mrs. Aquino.

Solitary confinement

"There was first of all a reversal of roles. Ninoy, the public person was effectively put out of sight by Marcos the dictator.

"Ninoy was placed in solitary confinement for most of his detention years and so Ninoy, the extrovert learned what it was to be alone.

"For me, the private person, I now had to be more visible," she said.

She said she had to overcome her shyness as she had to take part in various meetings with political and religious leaders as well as grant media interviews on behalf of Ninoy.

"It was during Ninoy's incarceration that I was getting special tutoring from him about politics and politicians," she said.

"My role then was mostly just to listen (to the opposition leaders) so I could report back to Ninoy and then for Ninoy to tell me what his answers were to their questions or suggestions.

Ninoy was assassinated on Aug. 21, 1983, and the national outrage eventually led to Marcos' overthrow in 1986 through the "People Power" revolt.

Mrs. Aquino, who ran against Marcos in the 1986 snap elections, was ushered to the presidency.

"When Ninoy was still alive, I could go to him and ask him for his advice on political matters and other problems. With Ninoy gone, I had so much difficulty in making important decisions," she said.

Boycott

Her first dilemma, she said, was when she had to decide whether to boycott the 1984 Batasan elections. Going against opposition stalwarts like Senators Lorenzo Tañada and Jose "Pepe" Diokno, who were for boycott, she went for participation.

"I spent many sleepless nights and I would pray that Ninoy would appear to me in a dream and give me the best advice. Unfortunately, Ninoy never did," she said.

She said she adhered to Ninoy's position to participate in the 1978 Batasan elections, to at least use the campaign as a forum to expose the evils of martial rule.

Vindicated

When the opposition got one-third of the Batasan seats, Mrs. Aquino said she felt vindicated.

"Ninoy never told me what my role should be if and when he died. Once when we were talking about death, he told me that when he died he wanted to be cremated and for me to get on a helicopter and scatter his ashes on Mt. Arayat.

"I stopped the discussion right there and then and told him: 'Ninoy, whoever gets left behind, will decide.' And that was it," she said.

"I hope that all of us here and many others will pray for each other and try to bring out the best in each other. Only then can we hope to have a better Philippines," Mrs. Aquino said.

The center was established through the endowment fund donated by Rolando and Rosalinda Hortaleza, owners of Splash Corp. of the famous skin care line.

Admiration

The couple chose to name the center after the Aquinos out of pure admiration.

"Ninoy and Cory Aquino are role models and shining examples of the leadership that combines character and capability. We admire the values they lived, and in the case of Ninoy, died for. These are the values that we sorely need today: integrity, self-sacrifice, an enduring love of country," Rolando Hortaleza said.

He said investing in research and training on leadership is his family's way of thanking the Filipino people for the success of its business.

The country has many management schools, but only a handful of schools on leadership formation, according to Ateneo president Fr. Bienvenido Nebres.

"We realize that the leadership crisis continues in our country and we need institutions that can focus with greater intensity and depth on this challenge," he said.

Qualities for a leader

Quoting from St. Ignatius' list of desired qualities for a leader, Nebres cited four "minimum requirements": trustworthiness, love for the institution and the people he leads, good judgment and sound learning.

He said the research and programs of the Ninoy and Cory Aquino Leadership Center would "help a future leadership enter into what is now a divided, indeed conflicted heart of our nation and bring healing and shared energy and hope for a better future."

Among those seen at the launching were Aquino's nephew Bam Aquino, niece Jackie Aquino, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, ex-Bangko Sentral Governor Gabriel Singson, Philip Juico, Rafael Lopa, former Tourism Secretary Tony Gonzales, Aquino's spokesperson Deedee Sytangco and Fr. Tito Caluag Jr.

STATEMENT OF CONCERN

On Oct. 1, 2003, President Gloria M. Arroyo met with the department of energy (DOE) officials and members of the LPG Industry Association (LPGIA) composed of representatives of Shell, Petron, Caltex, Total, Liquigaz and cylinder manufacturers. Following such meeting the President has certified as urgent the LPG bill pending in Congress according to press reports, and various directives were issued in accordance with representations made by the LPG Industry Association (LPGIA).

The other industry players were obviously left out in that consultation process. The independent LPG refillers and marketers who also have their own legitimate grievances and concern were not provided with the same forum as the oil majors. It is not surprising if actions taken nearly reflect the issues raised by the oil majors without regard to matters that affect independent LPG refillers and marketers.

It is sad to note that the slant in most media releases on fire incidents are blamed on independent refillers and marketers. What is not mentioned is the fact that these result from carelessness or negligence in the use of the LPG cylinders regardless of source. The bias against independent refillers and marketers have been reinforced by policies that cater mostly to the interest of the oil majors.

This bias is quite ironic considering that the source of LPG of the independent refillers and marketers come from said oil majors. The LPG in the cylinders sold by the independent refillers and marketers is the same LPG pumped into the cylinders of the oil majors. Any and all increases therefore in the price of the LPG sold by the independent refillers and marketers merely reflect upward adjustment in prices by the oil majors. For example, in November 2003 alone, there were in all 3 price increases:

November 01, 2003 P 1.00 per kilo or P 11.00 per cylinder,
November 10, 2003 P 1.00 per kilo or P 11.00 per cylinder,
November 17, 2003 P 1.00 per kilo or P 11.00 per cylinder.

Although announcement has been only with respect to the first price increase. The incomplete information given to the consuming public has oftentime resulted into confusion, to the detriment of the independent refillers and marketers who are thought of taking advantage of price increases.

It is not new anymore for the President of the Philippines to meet only with key players in business. However, the emerging trend in most societies is the empowerment of the small industry players. It would reflect very well on the style of governance by the President if she treats with the same genuine concern the other sectors of the industry. She will certainly gain new adherents from the independent refillers and marketers whose direct influence on voters cannot be completely ignored.

Liquefied Petroleum Gas Marketers Association, Inc.
(LPGMA)

ADVT.

Newcomer's appointment bucked by DOJ lawyers

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice's legal staff is up in arms over the appointment of one of Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong's executive assistants to a senior position in the legal department.

The legal staff members wrote a three-page letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo to protest the appointment of Kenny Tantuico as Assistant Chief State Counsel, which was previously held by now Court of Appeals Justice Rosalinda Vicente.

They said that Tantuico has been with the DOJ for only a few months and yet he was appointed to that position while others have been in the legal staff for 20 years.

"Madam President, we appeal to your statesmanship because we firmly believe that only you can make things happen. We believe that this is the appropriate time to recall the temporary appointment of Mr. Tantuico to ensure the unity and integrity of the Legal Staff," said the letter signed by 23 state counsels.

They said they had to write the President after Datumanong went on with his recommendation of Tantuico's appointment.

Their letter said Tantuico's appointment would "hinder the professional growth of trained career personnel" and cause "demoralization" and "disrupt the smooth operations" of the DOJ.

"We believed in the assuring words of Secretary Datumanong that he would seriously consider the appeal of the legal staff that the appointments to the position of the Assistant Chief State Counsel and the Chief State Counsel would come only from the legal staff. However, we now realize that the assurance has an entirely different meaning, for obvious reasons," they said.

Next in rank

"Never before did applicants outside the Legal Staff fill up a vacancy in the Office of the Chief State Counsel and of the Assistant Chief State Counsel. It has been the practice since time immemorial that appointments to the vacant positions come from the next in rank," the legal staff members said in their letter.

"Recognizing that it takes time to know the task of the legal staff, the past Secretaries of Justice upheld this tradition by recommending for appointment to the vacant positions only those who came from the legal staff," they added.

They noted that the DOJ, through the legal staff, serves as the legal counseling arm of all of the departments of the Executive Branch. The legal staff formulates legal opinions on citizenship appeals, extradition cases and controversial government contracts.

Its past members include Supreme Court Justices Conchita Morales and Minerva Gonzaga-Reyes, Court of Appeals Justices Buenaventura de la Fuente, Lorna de la Fuente, and Eriberto Rosario, Sandiganbayan Justice Teresita de Castro and Justice Undersecretary Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez.

"The department, through the legal staff, plays a vital role in the government's policy formulation. The discharge of the legal mandate requires the wisdom, the legal acumen, and the experience of the lawyers, developed through time," a legal staff member said.

But Datumanong defended Tantuico's appointment, saying that in the short time that Tantuico worked at the DOJ, he had shown "diligence, hard work, honesty and knowledge of the law and facts."

"Tantuico is a trustworthy man and he is very efficient. I know he can do his work according to the law," Datumanong said.

Gonzalez-Martinez; 95

LOURDES Gonzalez Martinez of Looc, Romblon, widow of Amando Martinez Sr., died on Nov. 25 at the age of 95.

She is survived by her children and children-in-law Linda and Roland Bolisay, Amando Jr. and Virginia, Dr. Guillermo and Glenda, Cesar and Agnes, Divina and Gerry Berenguer.

Her remains lie at the Funeraria Paz at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque. Visitation will be from Friday-Tuesday. Interment will be on Tuesday at 2 p.m. at the Manila Memorial Park.

Eucharistic Congress set

THE HOLY Spirit Adoration Sisters (Pink Sisters) and the Eucharistic League of Adorers Quezon City chapter have invited the public to attend the annual Eucharistic Congress on Nov. 30 at 71 Hemady Ave., New Manila, Quezon City.

Sr. Mary Niere, OCD, extern Carmelite from Zamboanga, will talk about the Healing Power of the Eucharist on the Family. She is a much sought after speaker in seminars on the teachings of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross in Canada, Taipei and the Philippines.

Registration starts at 7 a.m. while the Holy Mass will start at 4 p.m. Meals and snacks will be served. Contact numbers are: 0917-895-6921, 0918-901-6439, 0917-272-5177.

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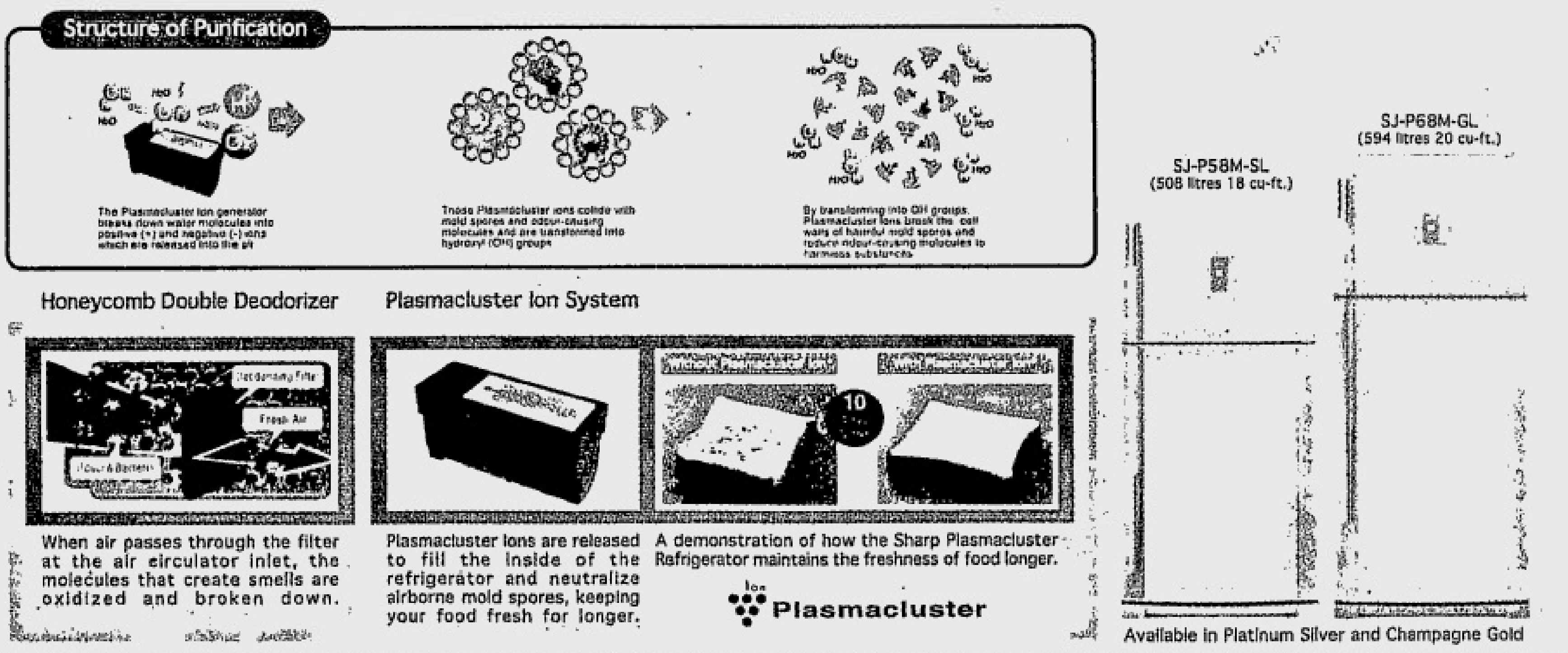

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DENR chief shrugs off ouster call

By Volt Contreras

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Elisea Gozun yesterday shrugged off a congressman's call for her ouster over her alleged incompetence in reviving the mining sector, saying Malacañang remains solidly behind her and the measures she had initiated to lure investors for the "responsible" exploitation of the country's mineral resources.

"The Palace already made a pronouncement last Friday that there's no truth (to reports) that I will be removed," Gozun told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

In a faxed press statement, she also attributed the "smear campaign" against her to unnamed "interest groups whose projects have been affected by the government's policies on sustainable development."

GOZUN

On Tuesday, Southern Leyte Rep. Aniceto Saludo accused Gozun of "incompetence" for her "counter-productive measures that ensure the death of the mining industry."

But Gozun wondered aloud what exactly was Saludo's complaint. "He hasn't called us about anything so I don't really know his reasons," she added. "I'll get in touch with him to find out what specific complaint he has."

Disputing the lawmaker's allegations, Gozun said among the steps she has taken to attract more mining players was to reduce red tape in the application for mining permits.

She reported that, since September, her agency had "reduced the steps by 33 to 75 percent depending on the type of permits applied for," from the exploration stage to actual production.

"It now only takes 15 days to act on a mining permit or contract application, to inform the applicant whether it was denied or granted," she said.

A "cleanup" of the current list of mining claimants is also ongoing with the goal of weeding out "dormant" operators, or those who have remained on the list for years without any work actually being done in their area, she added.

A "one-stop-shop" for potential mining investors has also been put at the Mines and Geosciences Bureau to spare interested parties the effort of going through the different offices in pursuing their inquiry or proposals, Gozun also said.

MGB Director Horacio Ramos, also in an interview, said among the groups now being entertained by his office following the implementation of these measures is the state-run minerals development firm of mainland China.

Non-Ferrous China, he said, has recently sent a delegation to look into iron and copper mining prospects in the country.

Election gun ban to start Dec. 15

By Martin P. Marfil

THE ELECTION gun ban and the prohibition on the use of bodyguards by candidates, the suspension of any elective official and transfer of civil service employees will start on Dec. 15 as the Commission on Elections approved its calendar of activities and periods on prohibited acts for the coming 2004 polls.

Comelec said that the same day, Dec. 15, will mark the start of the election period which will end on June 9, 2004.

The calendar was approved on Tuesday despite a congressional resolution seeking the holding of hybrid elections—meaning simultaneous elections using the manual and computerized systems—throughout the country.

The Comelec, which maintains that it is capable of holding computerized polls nationwide, is opposed to the proposal and wants the resolution vetoed, warning that it might result in bloodshed.

A decision has not been made as of yesterday afternoon and Malacañang has 30 days to act on the congressional resolution.

The period for the filing of candidacies and nominations for national and local positions in all areas will also start on Dec. 15 up to Jan. 2, the Comelec said in the resolution.

The last day for the substitution of candidates for all positions was set "not later than" Jan. 2, 2004.

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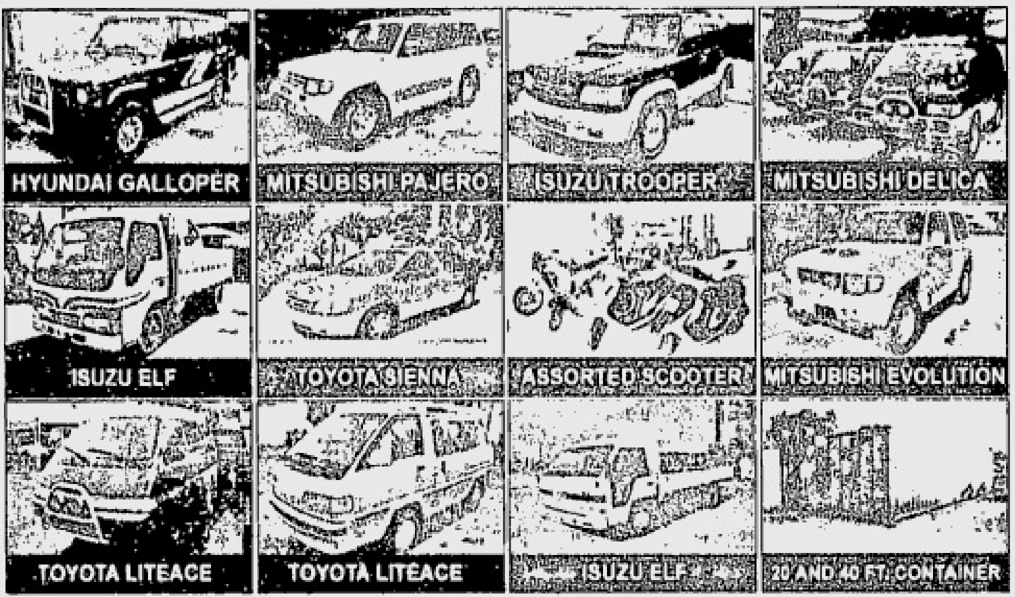

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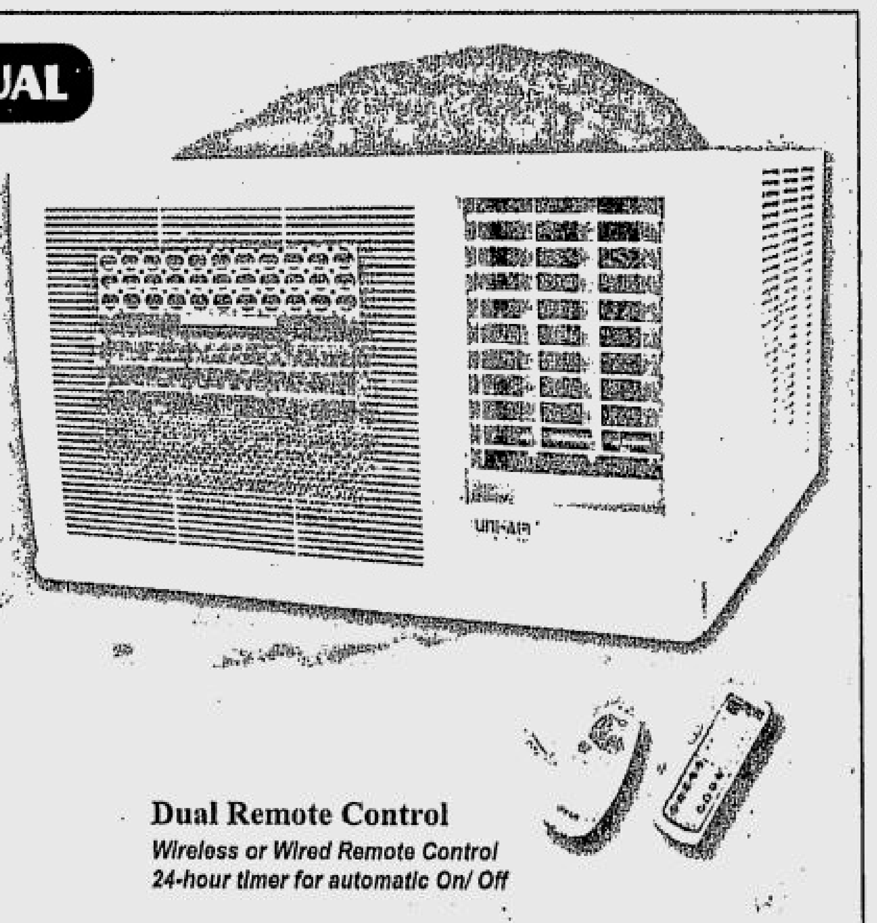

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Ninoy coin cleared for sale

TRADE and Industry Undersecretary Adrian S. Cristobal Jr. and BSP Deputy Governor Armando L. Suratos have officially cleared the sale and marketing in the Philippines of the Benigno S. Aquino commemorative coins.

A confusion on the sale of the coins which were minted by the Meyer's Mint of Germany upon the initiative of project proponent, Vivian Drilon through Goldquest Inc. in cooperation with the Spirit of Edsa Foundation arose when a news story came out in this paper concerning an old complaint against Goldquest in the DTI.

The complaint by one couple was about another, unrelated product, not the Aquino commemorative coin. Unfortunately, the news story quoting Cristobal's warning against Goldquest was connected to the formal launching of the commemorative gold coin on the late senator's 20th death anniversary creating some doubt on its credibility. The DTI "warning" has affected the sale of the Aquino coin in the country but not in the global market, it was learned. Cristobal later denied that he was referring to the commemorative coin but to another Goldquest product. Unfortunately it was not given the same prominence as his "warning."

Cristobal, in a letter to the law firm of Atty. Felipe Ramollo and Napoleon Rama dated Oct. 20, said that it had been established that the sale of the commemorative coins would be on a "cash basis and would not require its prospective buyers to recruit others to purchase in order to obtain the coin."

"The department finds that the project is not covered by the cease-and-desist order issued by the DTI Office of Legal Affairs on July 10, 2003, with regards to the pending case against Goldquest Int'l. and neither does it fall within the definitions of pyramiding and referral sales," Cristobal concluded.

Cristobal also based his clearance of the sale and marketing of the Ninoy commemorative coins on the approval of BSP Deputy Governor Armando Suratos of the project.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, November 27, 2003
34th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Dn 6:12-28
Gospel: Lk 21:20-28

Jesus said to his disciples, "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you must know that the time has come when it will be reduced to a wasteland. Then, if you are in Judea, flee to the mountains; if you are in the city, leave it; and let those who are in the fields not return to the city.

"For these will be the days of its punishment and all that was announced in the Scripture will be fulfilled. How hard will it be for pregnant women and for mothers with babies at the breast! For a great calamity will come upon the land, and divine justice upon this people. They will be put to death by the sword or taken as slaves to other nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled upon by the pagans until the time of the pagans is fulfilled.

"Then there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth anguish of perplexed nations when they hear the roaring of the sea and its waves. People will faint with fear at the mere thought of what is to come upon the world, for the forces of the universe will be shaken. And at this time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

"Now, when you see the first events, stand erect and lift up your heads, for your deliverance is drawing near."

Commentary

"And at this time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory." Some years ago, a number of people from Cavite, Philippines, went by the hundreds to a nearby mountain to wait for the end of the world. Their leader convinced them to sell their properties and prepare themselves for the final coming of Jesus on a particular day. Land, houses, appliances were sold at a fraction of the real value, for all these would be useless. It was a trap because people were credulous to a false prophet. Jesus is indeed coming, he is coming everyday in our lives through the sacraments, through his words, through people, through events, through nature, etc ... Are we ready to welcome him?

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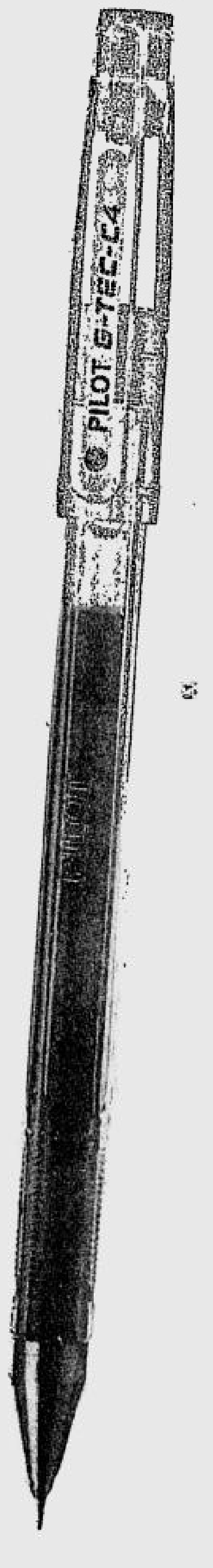

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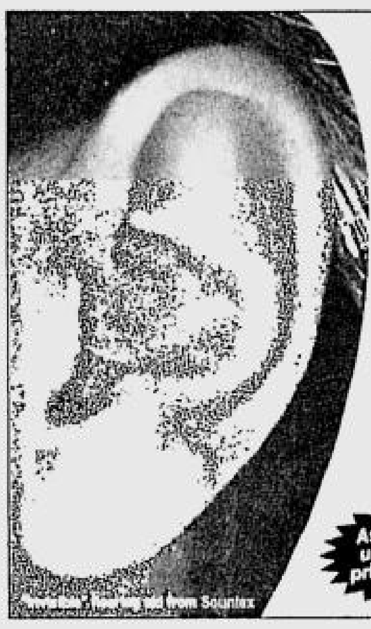

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What now, Ping? FPJ threatens to derail bid

From page A1

In a statement, Lacson said he would file his candidacy for president on Dec. 15, the first day of filing, regardless of Poe's announcement.

"I am determined to run for the presidency and no one can stop us now since we have long prepared for this," he said.

At the news conference, Lacson said he had expected Poe to announce that the latter was submitting to the LDP selection process, as the actor supposedly told him at a meeting on Nov. 14. "But this did not happen," he said.

Asked if this meant that Poe was uncertain about his candidacy because he stopped short of saying that he would run under the LDP banner, Lacson said: "It's not a matter of whether he's sure or not. What is clear is that he is not a member of the LDP."

Talking points

Lacson disclosed that during the meeting held at the actor's residence in Greenhills, San Juan, Poe said he would run in 2004 and "submit himself to the nomination of a dominant party."

He said another important thing that they agreed on was the need for the opposition to have only one standard-bearer.

However, Lacson said, Poe did not know whether to first declare his intention to run or join a party.

"He could not figure out [what would come first. He said, If I join the] LDP, will that make me a politician? I told him, Not unnecessarily so," Lacson said in Taglish.

He said he also told Poe that the actor could "project himself as a non-politician even if he has a party."

Lacson said Poe understood that the senator would "not respect" the party's selection process if he found it unfair.

"Poe agreed that he would not agree to such a process, so it is now his move if he would accept that kind of preparation for the selection process," Lacson said.

He said he had always known Poe to be "a perfect gentleman" and was now "curious" as to what the actor would do "if the party leaders continue to maneuver the selection process in his way."

Actually, he said, the LDP selection process was not being respected this early because party president Sen. Edgardo Angara had replaced local leaders with people who were not party members.

Annoyance

Lacson did not hide his annoyance at Senators Angara and Vicente Sotto, who, he had earlier said, were expressing preference for Poe over himself.

He insisted that the selection process should involve everyone in the party, according to the "democratic way."

"If Senators Angara and Sotto are the only ones to be followed, the LDP should be renamed Laban ng Diktatoryang Pilipino, or Struggle of the Filipino Dictatorship," he said.

Lacson's views are shared by his party mates in Congress—San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora, Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico and Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino, who were all present at the news conference.

LACSON: I am determined to run for the presidency and no one can stop us now. PDI FILE PHOTO

Aquino, LDP secretary general, said Poe should discuss with Lacson how they could help unite the opposition.

Zamora said what the party needed to ensure was the matter of having "only one candidate."

"We have to do this immediately," he said.

Suplico said that if Poe would take part in the LDP selection process without becoming a party member, "I will ask him to step out of the room [and] show him the door."

Mixed reactions

Poe's decision to run drew mixed reactions from congressmen belonging to various parties.

Batanes Rep. Florencio Abad—president of the Liberal Party, which has coalesced with the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats—said that while Poe was popular, the opposition could not afford to field two candidates against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Abad also said Lacson would have to reconsider his candidacy in view of Poe's entry into politics.

House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla and Cavite Rep. Gilbert Remulla, both Lacson supporters, said their candidate was more determined now to run for president under the LDP.

But with the possibility that Poe would submit to a selection process for a united opposition, "the next move now is for us to start comparing the programs of Lacson and Poe," Padilla said, adding:

"We believe that we owe it to the people to present the most acceptable programs of government and the most viable alternative to Ms Macapagal."

Inimical acts

Suplico said that Lacson was the only standard-bearer of the LDP and that Angara should explain why he had been committing acts inimical to the party.

"If there's anybody who is to be removed from the LDP, it should be those who are supporting other candidates outside of the party. I refer to Senators Ed Angara and Vicente Sotto," he said.

Suplico said he was recently replaced as party provincial chair on orders of Angara just because he was pushing for Lacson's candidacy.

He said he was replaced by a former mayor alleged to have taken his oath as a Lakas member and who was recently appointed by Ms Macapagal as director of Transco.

Remulla said Angara and Butz Aquino met yesterday at the house of Sen. Teresa Aquino-Oreta to discuss Poe's candidacy and the squabbles among party members on who should be standard-bearer.

"Senator Angara is not the president of the LDP, and he's not the LDP," Remulla said.

Formidable contender

Rep. Kim Bernardo-Lokin of the party-list group Citizens' Battle Against Corruption said Poe was a formidable contender and would boost the standing of the opposition in the elections.

But Lokin said she was withholding judgment until she reads Poe's program of government and his possible advisers and Cabinet members.

Muntinlupa Rep. Rozanno Rufino Biazon said Poe would now be able to tell the people what his program would be.

"The people should now hear from him directly, not through proxies," Biazon said.

Welcomed

Lakas spokesperson Heherson Alvarez welcomed Poe's decision to challenge Ms Macapagal and did not discount the possibility that some party members might support the actor.

"This is a boon to democracy because his final declaration, which has been prolonged, will open an opportunity for full transparency," Alvarez said.

But he said that while Poe was popular, it would be difficult for the actor to remain independent.

"You have to relate also because the presidency is a fulcrum, a focal point of leadership," Alvarez said. "A chopsuey party does not create an instant program. FPJ needs a party and it can't be made overnight. How can he carry out his programs without a party and party members in both houses of Congress?"

Nothing wrong

The Armed Forces sees nothing wrong with the virtual endorsement of Lacson's presidential bid by retired and reservist members of the military and police.

"Retired generals are civilians already. Once they have shed their uniform, their status is that of a civilian. They can engage in all the politics that they want," Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, AFP vice chief of staff, said at a press briefing.

A group calling itself the Soldiers for Peace and Progress, headed by retired Lt. Gen. Raul S. Urgello, issued a resolution expressing support for Lacson's "platform of governance" at a gathering at the Club Filipino in San Juan Tuesday morning.

Resolution

Apart from Urgello, the resolution was signed by retired Generals Emiliano Templo, Ruperto Ambil Jr., Pedro Balbanero, Manuel Salimbangon, Fidel Singson and Rodolfo Vasquez, retired Commodores Ismael Aparri, George Templo, Jacinto Aquino and Dante Ruiz, and retired Rear Adm. Rodolfo Rabago, among others.

Lacson spoke at the gathering and took a swipe at the President's alleged early campaigning.

Garcia, however, pointed out that officers and men in the active service, including those affiliated with the Association of Generals and Flag Officers (Agfo), were barred from supporting any candidate.

Neither can the Agfo make a "political stand" in the 2004 elections because it is composed not only of retired but also of active officers.

With a report from TJ Burgonio

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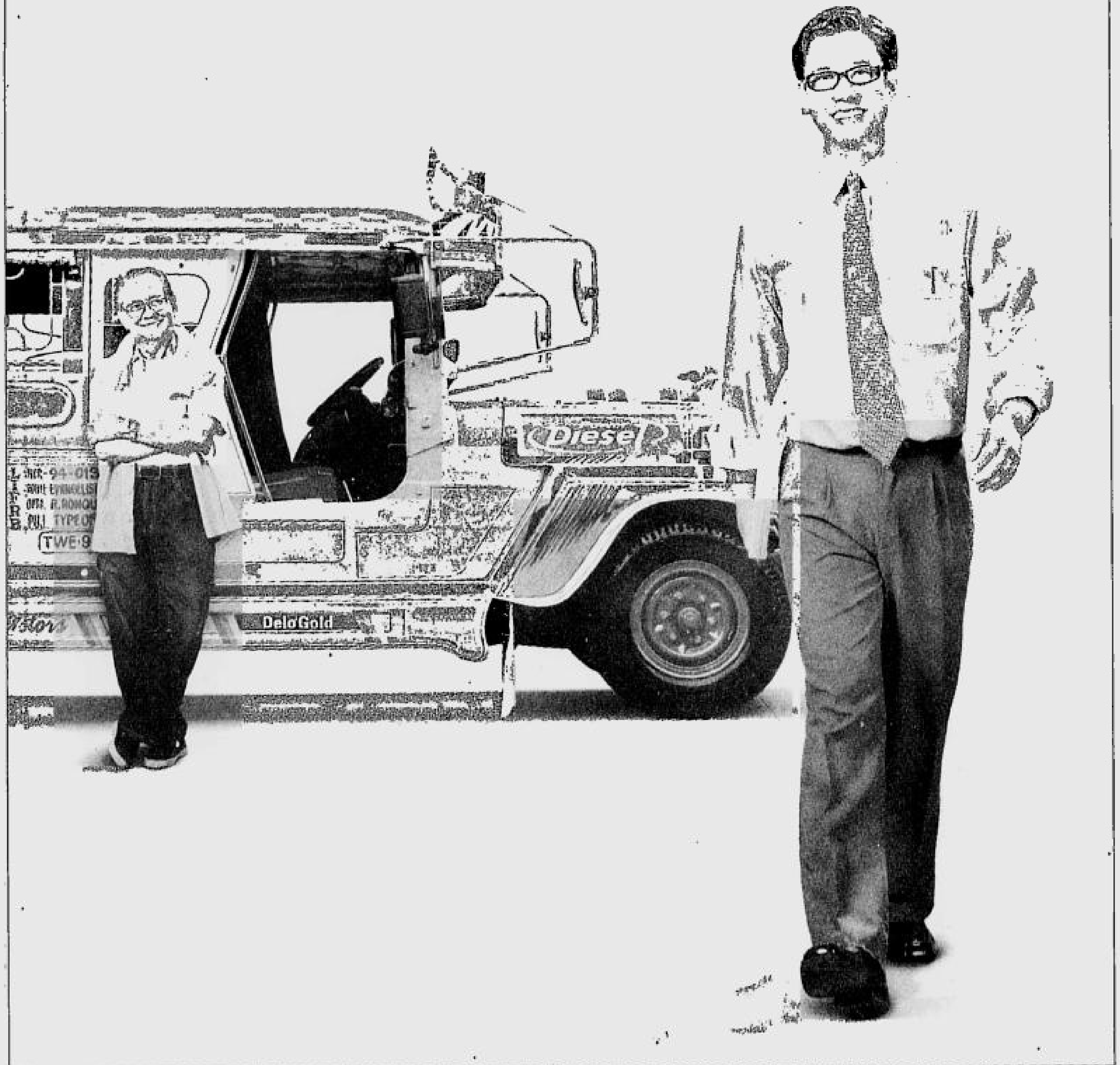

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Show biz folk rally round FPJ candidacy

From page A1

not run, I will go all-out for [the senator]. But if Ronnie runs, I cannot turn my back on him."

It was Poe, known as the "Da King" of Philippine movies, who started calling Estrada by the pet name that eventually became famous—"Erap," a reverse of "pare," Filipino slang for friend.

Show biz royalty

And Poe appears to be assured of the support of show biz "royalty."

One of his political leaders, who asked not to be named, said Dolphy, the king of Philippine comedy, would campaign for Poe in 2004.

"This is the first time that Dolphy will do this for a friend from show biz," the source said.

But Dolphy, who did not campaign for Estrada in the 1998 presidential election, could not be reached for comment.

Poe's wife Susan Roces, acknowledged as the queen of Philippine movies, is standing by her man every step of the way.

Dressed in a blue-green pantsuit, Roces was beside her husband when he declared yesterday that he was in the running.

"I promised to support him in all his decisions," Roces said in Filipino. "It is my responsibility to serve him and my country in the best way that I can."

'Unity president'

Another show biz stalwart who is harboring high hopes for Poe's victory is actor Jinggoy Estrada, a former San Juan mayor and eldest son of the deposed President.

"I'm very willing to help him achieve his vision. He wants to unite Filipinos. He is the unity president," Jinggoy told the INQUIRER.

Jinggoy also said his father could be assured of a fair trial of his plunder case if Poe wins.

"The Macapagal administration is dead set on convicting my father. In fact, it has created a special division to convict him," said Jinggoy.

'Fair trial'

He added that his father was seeking, not a pardon, but "a fair trial."

Actor Rudy Fernandez, a former president of the Kapisanan ng mga Artista ng Pelikulang Pilipino, said he would volunteer to campaign for Poe although he was not among those who convinced the latter to run.

"I will support him 100 percent," Fernandez said. "My wife [actress Lorna Tolentino] has so much faith in him, too."

'Smartest thing'

Poe's brother, actor Conrad Poe, said: "All I can say is that he won't be alone. We are here to unite [with] and support him all the way."

Actress and film producer Armida Siguion-Reyna said Poe's decision to run was "the smartest thing" he had ever done.

In August, Siguion-Reyna told Poe's supporters to "be patient" and "give him time" to decide.

Yesterday, she said: "He is not corrupt. He's got his heart and mind in the right place, not in his pocket."

Siguion-Reyna is a member of the FPJ for President Movement, which spearheaded a signature campaign to convince the actor to seek the presidency in 2004. The movement claimed to have gathered five million signatures as of October.

Mass appeal

She has likened Poe's mass appeal to that of hero Andres Bonifacio. She has also said the Philippines had not prospered because it lacked a model who would inspire the people to do great things for themselves and for the country.

Actor Richard Gomez said he was very pleased that Poe had finally declared the intention to run. He said the opposition must unite and support only one candidate.

40 years

Estrada said there was more between him and Poe than their 40 years of friendship.

"He has greatly supported me in my political career," Estrada said of the actor who campaigned for him when he ran for mayor, senator, vice president and president.

According to Estrada, he was the only actor-turned-politician that Poe ever campaigned for.

"He campaigned for me all over the country. He had to reject or shelve movie projects to be able to campaign for me," said the ousted President.

Now he will return the favor, he added.

Estrada is confident that his friend is the unbeatable presidential candidate.

"I had the widest margin of votes against my closest opponent during the last presidential election. I think it is only FPJ who can break that record," he said with a hearty laugh.

'Only regret'

Estrada said it was his "only regret" that his detention would make it impossible for him to personally campaign for Poe.

"But I will do so in my limited ways," he said.

In an interview Monday, Estrada lashed at those who were blaming Poe's political ambitions for the fall of the peso against the dollar.

"That's too much. Why pick on him when it is clearly their fault that we have all these problems?" he said, directing a broadside at the present occupants of the Palace.

SEN. Loren Legarda is touted as FPJ's running mate in the 2004 presidential elections.

JESS YUSON

DE VENECIA: In a four-cornered fight, Gloria will win.

ERIK ARAZAS

RAUL ROCO: Poe will cannibalize Lacson's votes, he'll also take away votes from GMA.

PDI FILE PHOTO

Roco glad, GMA glum: I will not talk politics

From page A1

comes from man, leader ship comes from God," Rufino said.

In an interview with ANC television, presidential adviser on legislative affairs Gabriel Claudio said Poe was a "worthy adversary."

Claudio said Lakas-CMD planned to offset Poe's popularity with the President's "proven leadership based on actual accomplishments and her tenacity in responding to the challenges that have come her way."

Uncertainty

Claudio said the President's experiences stood in stark contrast to the uncertainty of a presidency under Poe.

For his part, presidential chief of staff Rigoberto Tiglao said :"All polls show Poe is far from having Erap's electoral strength in 1998. Erap's strength came not only from his screen popularity but his political career of over 30 years."

Lakas stalwarts in the House of Representatives also appeared unperturbed about a Poe candidacy. Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. said Poe's candidacy could augur well for Ms Macapagal's bid to get a full six-year term because the opposition vote would be split into three.

"There are three in the opposition-Poe, Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Raul Roco. (The administration) has only one candidate-President Gloria," De Venecia said.

In a four-cornered fight, the Speaker predicted victory for the Lakas candidate. "Three of them will divide the votes, so Gloria will win."

Command vote

Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzales called Poe "incompetent." Asked about Poe's chances of winning in the polls, he said: "If all Filipinos are stupid, he might win."

Rep. Prospero Pichay said popularity was only good at this early stage. "In rural areas, local political leaders have command. They have a command vote. At the end of the day when it come to a political campaign, these political leaders will deliver the vote needed to win in 2004," he said.

Voters now rely on capability and experience over popularity, according to Rep. Allan Peter Cayetano (Lakas, Taguig-Pateros).

PRESIDENT Macapagal is in no mood to talk politics during the 63rd anniversary of the 1st Scout Ranger Regiment in Camp Tecson, Barangay Tartaro, San Miguel, Bulacan. Behind her is Col. Danilo Lim, commander of the Scout Rangers.

VAL HANDUMON

"Governance is not about who is more popular," he said. "This is the message the administration wants to convey to the public."

But Albay Gov. Al Francis Bichara, who had affirmed his support for Ms Macapagal early this month, has a different view. Bichara said Poe would certainly draw the votes from the masses.

"What can we do? He'll certainly get the masses," Bichara said. Aside from some votes from socioeconomic classes A, B and C, Poe has a strong hold on classes D and E, the governor said.

Bichara said "FPJ will definitely affect him (Roco)" even if the former senator was strong in Bicol. Asked if Poe was a threat to the President, Bichara replied, "Popularity is a threat of course." *With reports from Michael Lim Ubac and Carlito Pablo in Manila and Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Poe's Palace bid spooks business community

From page A1

said. "I don't think he's going to be good for the economy."

Former Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Cielito Habito, who now heads the Ateneo Center for Economic Research and Development, said the financial markets would react negatively in the short term because of the general perception that Poe had strong chances of winning.

"Because he has no experience in governance, some think he may be detrimental to the country's long-term economic program," Habito said.

Best personal reputation

Even so, Habito said he would like to hold off making any judgment on Poe's candidacy. "On the upside, he has the best personal reputation among the candidates," he said.

Economic officials, however, urged Poe to immediately lay down his economic agenda on the table and declare the identities of his economic advisers to cushion any negative impact that his candidacy could have on financial markets and on business confidence.

"It is very crucial for him to immediately declare his economic platform and to say who will be his economic advisers to help ease the concerns of the market," said Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura.

"People know that he is a formidable candidate. And given his lack of experience in politics and in running the economy, it makes the market jittery. But it could be mitigated if he would immediately lay down his plans if he wins," National Treasurer Sergio Edeza added.

"Lack of experience is not necessarily a negative thing. But the people that he would bring to office is important," he said.

Economic agenda

Sergio Ortiz-Luis, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce, said Poe and other presidential aspirants had been invited to a roundtable discussion on their economic agenda on Saturday by the Philippine Business Conference.

"We don't know much about the guy, but we are inviting him to a forum where he could discuss how he intends to run the country," said Ortiz-Luis. Other candidates invited to the forum are President Macapagal-Arroyo, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, and former Education Secretary Raul Roco.

The Philippine Business Conference is an annual event where various business groups in the country gather to formulate a roadmap for the Philippines and set action plans on how the private sector may help the country's economy move forward.

Labor groups likewise challenged Poe to reveal his program of action for the working class.

"We demand not just a populist slogan like 'Erap para sa mahihirap,' which is but an electoral gimmick to solicit the support of the masses. We want him (Poe) to present solutions to workers' woes such as unemployment, low wages, high cost of living, contractualization, retrenchment, shutdowns and rotations," Partido ng Manggagawa Rep. Renato Magtubo said in a statement.

Moodys downgrade

Moody's said in a statement it had placed on review for possible downgrade the Philippines' long-term foreign and local currency ceilings and ratings.

"In view of the tensions that have accompanied political cycles in the past, the nation's fiscal policy could be handcuffed and capital outflows could become more volatile as May's presidential election approaches," the New York-based ratings agency said.

It said there were deep political tensions in the country that could weaken its external payments position, prompt an outflow of capital and impede fiscal reforms.

Strong fundamentals

But Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the Philippines' strong economic fundamentals and robust growth rates should head off a ratings downgrade by Moody's in the near term.

"Our economic fundamentals remain sound, our third-quarter gross domestic product and gross national product will prove this," Buenaventura told reporters when asked to comment on Moody's announcement.

"We hope to have more positive numbers in the next two months to forestall any downgrade," he added.

The Philippines is expected to post a third-quarter growth in gross domestic product of around 4.3 percent when it reports out the latest GDP figures today.

Moody's has a Ba1 rating on the Philippines' foreign debt, one notch below investment grade and one above those assigned by rival agencies, including Standard and Poor's.

Analysts said Moodys' move was largely technical, following the ratings agency's announcement in September that it had cut its outlook on the country's huge foreign borrowings, with a downgrade now mostly priced into the country's markets.

Budget watch

Analysts also said Moody's move was unlikely to hit markets hard when they reopen on Thursday after a one-day public holiday but it underscored rising concern the government may lose its grip on the closely watched budget deficit ahead of the May elections.

The worries were fanned last week when respected Finance Secretary Jose Camacho said he would resign at the end of November, an announcement that dragged the peso close to record lows and widened spreads on Philippine dollar bonds.

"We have been saying for some time that there has been a 60 percent probability of a one-notch downgrade before the middle of next year," said Tim Condon, chief economist for Asia at ING Financial Markets. "The market has priced in a downgrade by Moody's and I think there would not be a great deal of market impact."

Moody's September announcement of a cut in its outlook on long-term foreign currency borrowings sent the peso lower and reminded investors of political risks in the country following a failed coup by soldiers in July.

Budget deficit

Driving the negative ratings is a budget deficit expected to total P202 billion ($3.6 billion) this year and an overall debt pile of $58 billion.

"It's not surprising that they are thinking of cutting it. The fiscal performance has not been going very well in the last three months," said Dilip Parameswaran, director of credit research at Credit Agricole Indosuez.

"It looks like the Philippines may reach their targeted fiscal deficit for the financial year, but the target itself is high enough." *Reports from Clarissa S. Batino, Mitch Remo, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Doris C. Dumlao, and Reuters*

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

ADVICE OF LEE KUAN YEW

US urged to go after terrorist preachers

SINGAPORE—Singapore's founding father says US President George W. Bush's decision to use military might against terrorists was a mistake, saying it would only eliminate "worker bees."

LEE

Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew, 80, said that working with moderate Islamic leaders was the key to stopping terrorists, in an interview for Newsweek magazine's Dec. 1 edition.

"Americans, however, make the mistake of seeking a largely military solution. You must use force. But force will only deal with the tip of the problem," Lee said, according to a transcript released by the information ministry.

"In killing the terrorists, you will kill the worker bees. The queen bees are the preachers, who teach a deviant form of Islam," Lee said.

Lee, one of Asia's elder statesmen, was Singapore's prime minister for 25 years up to 1990 and still wields considerable influence under the title of senior minister. His son has been designated as the country's next prime minister and Lee's views on world affairs are still much sought after.

The United States and its allies must help moderate Muslims limit the influence of extremists instead of charging down doors in an attempt to flush out terrorists, Lee said.

"You can't go into the mosques, Islamic centers, and *madrasahs* (Islamic schools). We have no standing as non-Muslims, no legitimacy," he continued. "Your barging in will create havoc."

Recently, US forces in Iraq have been on high alert as attack continue to intensify and have stepped up raids on suspected terrorist hideouts.

On Indonesia, Lee said that Muslim cleric Abu Bakar Bashir was the real force behind the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah terror network, and cited him as terrorists' mentor who "churns out these kind of people."

Bashir was acquitted in September of charges that he led Jemaah Islamiyah, but was convicted and jailed four years for treason.

"Men like Bashir are the real force behind the terror," said Lee.

The group is blamed for the Bali bombings in 2002 that killed over 200 people, the Marriott hotel blasts in Jakarta in August and for plotting a series of attacks against Western targets in Singapore. *AP*

KASSANDRA Collins, widow of S/Sgt. Gary L. Collins of Hardin, Texas, and their daughter Taylor, 8, pause at Collin's casket during funeral services at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., on Nov. 25. Collins was killed on Nov. 8 in Fallujah, Iraq where his vehicle was hit by an explosive device. AP

US arrests wife, daughter of Saddam's top deputy

BAGHDAD—US troops arrested the wife and daughter of a top Saddam Hussein deputy suspected of masterminding attacks on US troops, and a major pipeline linking northern Iraqi oilfields to the country's biggest refinery was ablaze Wednesday.

Hours after large explosions shook the center of Baghdad near the US headquarters, the visiting British foreign secretary said Iraq would be a safer place once the US- and British-led coalition hands over power to an Iraqi government.

Troops of the US 4th Infantry Division in Samarra, 115 km north of Baghdad, arrested the wife and daughter of Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri, a top Saddam associate, division spokesperson Lt. Col. William MacDonald said Wednesday.

Under Saddam, Al-Douri was vice chair of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council, and shortly before the war began March 20, Saddam placed him in charge of defenses in northern Iraq.

US officials have said they believe Al-Douri had planned some of the attacks against US forces, and last week offered a $10 million reward for information leading to his capture. Al-Douri is No. 6 on the list of 55 most-wanted Iraqis.

MacDonald said a man he identified as the son of a physician was also taken into custody in the raid Tuesday. He had no further information about the man.

Pipeline ablaze

Witnesses near the village of Sharqat, 275 km north of Baghdad, said sheets of flame and thick black smoke were shooting from the damaged pipeline, only 50 km from Iraq's largest oil refinery.

There was no immediate explanation for the cause of the blaze, but guerrillas have repeatedly attacked pipelines in the general area. The attacks have complicated efforts to revive Iraq's giant petroleum industry, the key to its economic recovery.

Iraq has the second-largest proven petroleum reserves in Opec. But many companies are holding back until they see an improvement in security against attacks by militants opposed to American troops and the US-backed Iraqi Governing Council.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, on a two-day visit to Iraq, said a political transition to Iraqi rule would improve the security situation. More than five dozen US troops have been killed by hostile fire in November, more than any other month since the official end of major combat in Iraq on May 1.

"I'm absolutely sure that a more rapid political process will assist the security situation," Straw said at a news conference.

"The more that we can give all Iraqis a stake in their future and a stable political architecture in which to work, the more I believe more Iraqis will become committed to that future and fewer will think that terror and quiescence in terror is the way forward."

Straw said he met with members of the coalition-appointed Iraqi Governing Council to discuss the political process, in which the council is to hand over power to a new, transitional government by June 30.

"Iraq is a better place and will become a far better place as a result of that transition," he said. "Life for a very large number of people in Iraq is considerably better... and will be infinitely better when we can get on top of the security situation."

3 explosions

Three large explosions shook downtown Baghdad on Tuesday evening, triggering a warning siren in the "Green Zone" housing the US headquarters. Capt. David Gercken, a spokesman for the US 1st Armored Division, said rockets hit a bus station, a propane station and an apartment building, wounding two Iraqis, near—but not in—the "Green Zone."

US Col. William Darley, said Tuesday that attacks against US forces peaked at more than 40 per day about two weeks ago and have since dropped to about 30 per day—about the same as in October and well over the number in August and September.

Since operations began in Iraq, 297 US service members have died in hostile action, including 183 since May 1 when President George W. Bush declared an end to major fighting.

Straw said the obstacles in Iraq shouldn't come as a surprise.

"Military action is an uncertain business," he said. "What we knew that we faced for certain was a tyrant in Saddam Hussein and a highly organized network of terror and repression, and we were never under any illusions that it would be possible to remove this in one go."

The US command has in recent weeks pursued insurgents more aggressively in an attempt to stop them before they strike. *AP*

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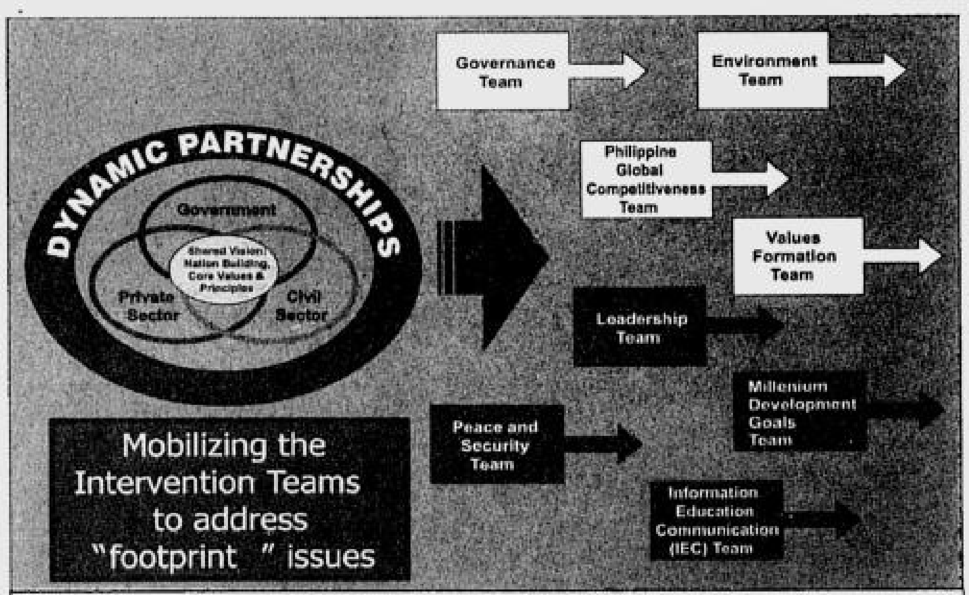
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Bribery down in Mexico

MEXICO CITY—Corruption has decreased in Mexican society but is still a major national problem, according to a survey released on Tuesday. Researchers estimated that Mexican paid out a billion dollars in bribes in the last year.

The report by the nongovernment organization Transparency International surveyed Mexicans on 38 sorts of bribes, ranging from motorists paying policemen after running red lights to households bribing garbage collectors to collect their trash.

It found that bribes were paid in 8.5 percent of such cases in the last 12 months, a drop of 2 percentage points from a similar survey carried out in 2001.

"The results are encouraging," said Eduardo Bohorquez, Transparency's national director. "It shows there is nothing in Mexicans' genetic code or in Mexican culture that means corruption is inherent and cannot be reduced."

Mexican President Vicente Fox, who ended seven decades of one-party rule when he came to power in 2000, has vowed to stamp out corruption.

However, Transparency International representatives said the decrease in bribes probably was not due to government policy.

"There are many other factors, such as a slowdown in the economy and more mechanized transactions that reduce the number of bribes," said Transparency technical adviser Roy Campos.

The new survey of more than 14,000 Mexicans nationwide found the average amount of a bribe, known in Mexico as a "bite," was 107 pesos ($9.43). Mexicans paid an average of 7 percent of their incomes in bribes, but minimum-wage earners paid out 29.5 percent of their earnings, according to the report.

"Corruption is like a tax. And for the poorest members of society it is a very big tax," said Campos.

While bribes seem to be declining, Mexicans' perception of corruption is not, said Bohorquez. In an international survey on perceived corruption released annually by Transparency, Mexico has scored the same for the last two years running, finishing in 58th place out of 102 countries—a rating similar to that of Colombia.

"Things haven't changed much at all," said Mexico City taxi driver Hector Ceron, who recently paid a "bite" to a police officer for illegal parking. "There is still corruption and there always has been. It's just a bit more discreet these days." *AP*

Indian weds 2 sisters to skirt bigamy laws

LUCKNOW, India—In an odd twist on Hindu marriage tradition, an Indian man has married two sisters, one of them handicapped, in a double wedding that has the consent of both families so that the ill sister can be guaranteed lifelong care.

Amar Verma, 26, from Lucknow, capital of northern Uttar Pradesh state, married Ragini Verma, 18, and her physically disabled sister, Preeti, 21, in a simple ceremony Tuesday in the brides' hometown of Jalaun, 300 km to the southwest.

The groom said that when he had asked to marry Ragini, her father, a retired schoolteacher with little money, insisted that he also marry Preeti. "It seems he is concerned about Preeti's future after he is no more," Amar said.

In Indian weddings, the groom takes a vow to take responsibility for all of his wife's needs for the rest of her life, a more binding commitment than a simple promise to care for her sick relatives. Divorce is virtually nonexistent in rural areas of India, so the women's father felt more confident of Preeti's welfare if she became Verma's bride.

The marriage was solemnized in accordance with Hindu rites. Preeti, who was brought in a wheelchair, was the first to place a garland around the Amar's neck.

"I am happy with this marriage... I know my responsibilities," Amar said on Wednesday by telephone from Jalaun.

"We viewed the situation from a humanitarian point of view," Amar's father, Ram Swarup Verma, told The Asian Age, an Indian English-language newspaper. "Preeti is confined to a wheelchair and it would be difficult for her to fend for herself alone." *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

London muggings up

LONDON—The number of reported muggings in London rose 20 percent during US President George W. Bush's visit last week as thousands of police officers were moved off regular beats to provide security for the event, police said Wednesday. Reports of street robberies in the capital rose from the average rate of 150 a day to 180 for each of the three days of the visit, a spokesperson for London's Metropolitan Police said. Officers worked 14,000 shifts to police the presidential visit and around 5,000 officers were on duty Thursday for a protest march through central London which saw some 100,000 demonstrators vent their anger at Bush. *AP*

Thai king kills bill

BANGKOK—Thailand's government said Wednesday it would redraft legislation on educational reforms after it was rejected by the constitutional monarch in an unprecedented move that has severely embarrassed the ruling party. King Bhumibol Adulyadej returned the "Teachers and Education Personnel Regulating Bill" this week to parliament without signing it because of "flaws," said the spokesperson for the ruling Thai Rak Thai party, Suranand Vejjajiva. "The government humbly acknowledges its mistake, because there were some flaws in (the) bill," Suranand said. The royal palace did not give reasons for the rejection. Teachers were against it because they feared it may reduce their salaries and benefits, and they petitioned the 75-year-old king to block it. *AP*

Death toll hits 37

MOSCOW—The death toll from a fire at a Moscow dormitory for foreign students rose to 37 when a Peruvian student died in a hospital, officials said Wednesday as mourners gathered at the university to pay their respects to the victims. The 18-year-old died overnight from injuries he received in the fire that erupted before dawn Monday at the dormitory of the Peoples' Friendship University in Moscow, said Lyubov Zhomova of the Moscow Health Directorate. Nearly 200 others have remained hospitalized, many in grave condition. Russian officials blamed the high number of victims on neglect and the lack of basic safety precautions. They said that the building lacked a fire alarm system and there was no evacuation plan for its residents, many of whom didn't speak Russian. *AP*

Protest fast

SEOUL—South Korea's main opposition leader on Wednesday launched a hunger strike, accusing President Roh Moo-hyun of covering up corruption surrounding his former aides. The fast by Choe Byung-yul, chair of the Grand National Party, deepened a political crisis in South Korea amid mounting challenges, including an economic downturn, North Korea's nuclear program and the controversial US request to send more troops to Iraq. Choe began fasting at the National Assembly to protest against the president's veto of an independent probe into corruption allegations surrounding Roh's former aides and his campaign funding last year. *AP*

No guarantees

SEOUL—The United States' proposed security assurances for North Korea won't necessarily guarantee the survival of Pyongyang's communist regime, South Korea's foreign minister said Wednesday as Japan and South Korea ramped up talks aimed at persuading North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons programs. The comments by Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan came amid a flurry of diplomatic efforts to arrange a fresh round of six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Yoon said that North Korea's demands for a security guarantee were being discussed, but suggested Wednesday that Washington and Pyongyang's neighbors were unlikely to offer security assurances for North Korea's regime. *AP*

Militia disarms

MEDELLIN, Colombia—Hundreds of right-wing militia fighters surrendered their guns Tuesday in a ceremony heralded by the government as a step toward peace but denounced by critics as a show that lets killers, kidnappers and drug peddlers off the hook. Gathered inside Medellin's convention center, the 855 members of the Cacique Nutibara bloc sang the national anthem, then laid their rifles, ammunition belts and camouflage shirts in piles on the floor. Government peace commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo called the disarmament a significant move toward finally ending Colombia's four-decade war. But Wende Gozan of Amnesty International in New York said President Alvaro Uribe was fast-tracking a paramilitary demobilization at the expense of justice. *AP*

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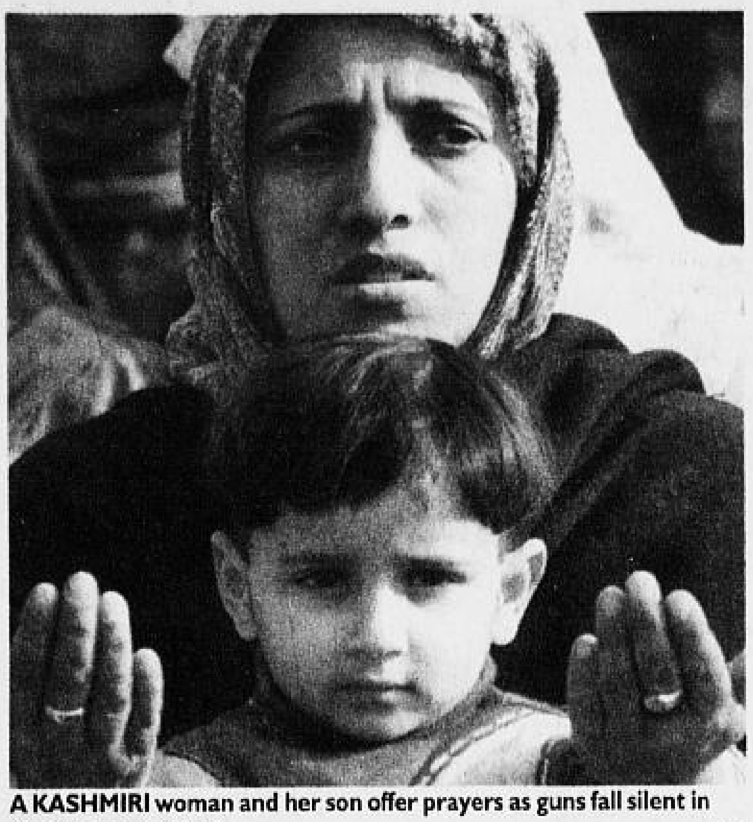


A KASHMIRI woman and her son offer prayers as guns fall silent in the war-torn region. AFP

INDIA-PAKISTAN TRUCE

All quiet on Kashmir front

NEW DELHI/MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan—Nuclear rivals India and Pakistan began a ceasefire on Wednesday along their frontier in the disputed Kashmir region, one of the most heavily militarized and volatile borders in the world.

The new move to calm relations between the two nations, launched as Muslims on both sides celebrated their most important festival, appeared to be at least initially successful.

"We haven't fired a single bullet, nor has there been any report that India has fired," said a Pakistani Army officer commanding the Chakothi sector, south of Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistani Kashmir.

An Indian Army official said no firing was reported since the ceasefire went into effect at midnight Indian time on the Line of Control dividing Kashmir and positions on the Siachen glacier, the world's highest battleground.

"The border is all quiet after the ceasefire was implemented," an Indian Army spokesperson said in Jammu, the winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir state.

Indian and Pakistani troops, who are in close proximity at several places along the 742-km control line in Kashmir, usually exchange gunfire nearly every day.

The two countries have gone to war three times since they were carved out of British colonial India in 1947, twice over Muslim-dominated Kashmir, which they both claim.

Hours before the truce went into effect, the two sides traded artillery and machine gun fire, wounding three Pakistani children, police in the Pakistani part of Kashmir said.

The ceasefire came on the day the region celebrated Eid'l Pitr, the most important Muslim fesitval. Residents said it was the most peaceful Eid in over a decade.

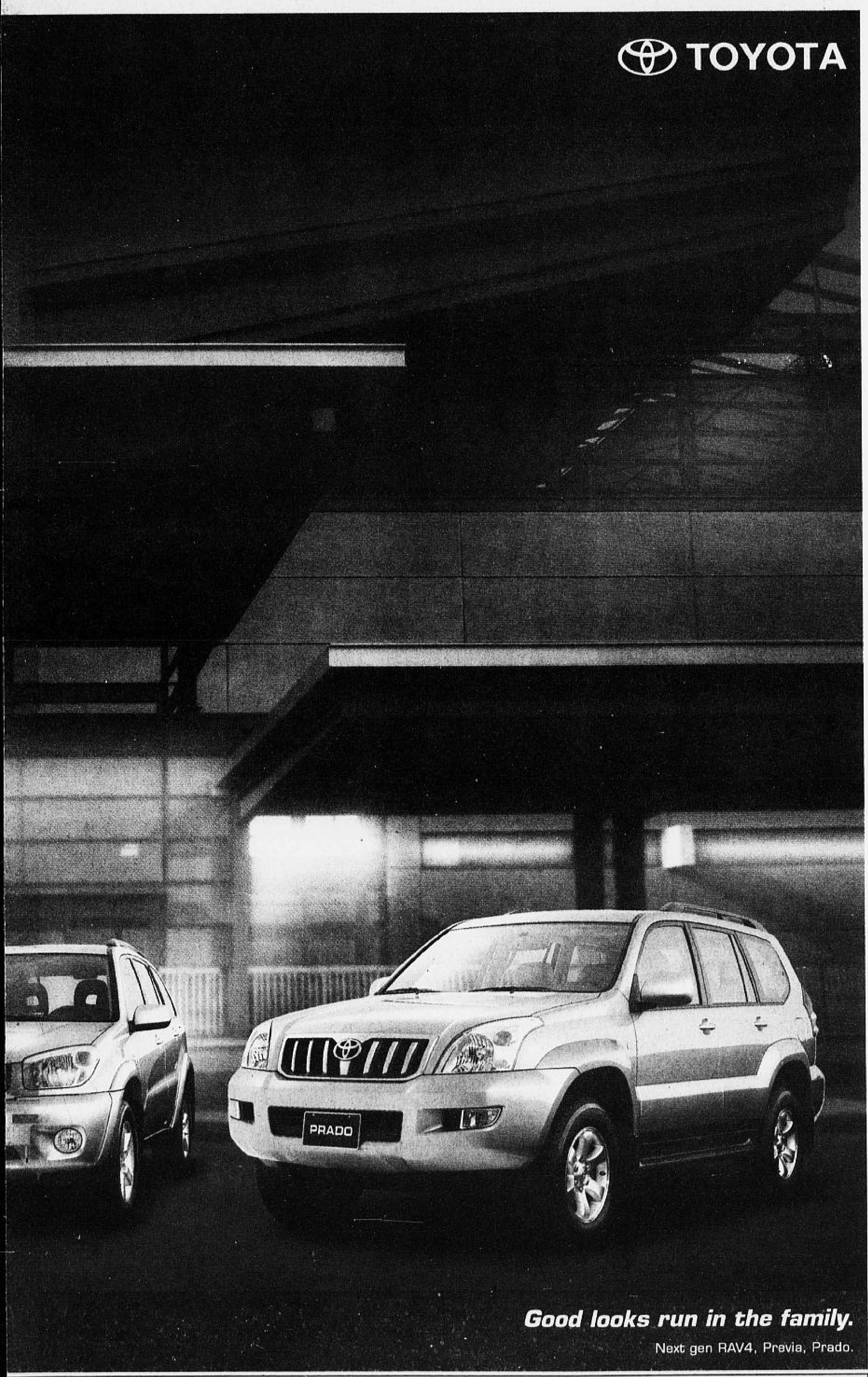
"It's calm and quiet. There is a complete lull on the line of control," said Ghulam Sarwar, superintendent of police in Muzaffarabad.

Both sides said they were committed to observing the ceasefire "in letter and spirit," which extends to the frozen wastes of the Siachen glacier in northern Kashmir where the two have been locked in battle since 1984.

Analysts say the ceasefire in Kashmir will help improve the atmosphere ahead of an expected visit to Islamabad by Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee for a regional summit in early January.

"We do hope that this ceasefire leads to a dialogue between the two countries that Pakistan has been asking for so often, and ultimately resolution of the Kashmir issue," said Pakistan military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Shaukat Sultan earlier.

New Delhi has so far rejected any possibility of Vajpayee holding talks with Pakistani leaders on the sidelines of the summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Asia summit, saying Islamabad must first stop helping militants fighting Indian rule in Kashmir. *Reuters*



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AK-47 inventor longs for world without violence

DELFT, Netherlands—The inventor of what has been described as the world's most important and widespread weapon says he has one wish before he dies—to live in a society without war.

"What I want is to live to see that moment when there is peace and happiness on the planet," Mikhail Kalashnikov, who created the assault rifle that bears his name, said.

"I want my legacy to be the spread of peace in the world; that the murders stop, that the wars stop and that politicians learn to settle their problems in a peaceful way."

Kalashnikov, 84, says that despite its proliferation in war zones around the world, he has never really viewed his invention as a killing machine, but as an instrument of peace.

Nearly six decades of test-firing have left the sprightly Kalashnikov—now a decorated general—hard of hearing. But he speaks clearly and passionately of what led him to create the AK-47, literally the "Automatic Kalashnikov, 1947."

Kalashnikov says he envisioned the gun in the early years of World War II while recovering from combat wounds as his country reeled from the Nazi onslaught in a conflict that would claim the lives of more than 25 million Soviet citizens.

"I created this weapon because of Germany and the war. I was a soldier then. Soldiers need a simple and reliable weapon," Kalashnikov, the rows of medals on his chest sparkling in the light, said in an interview.

Symbol of perfection?

In the Dutch city of Delft for an exhibition on the AK-47, the former tank commander rejected suggestions that he or his rifle were in any way responsible for the conflicts in which it has been used.

"No single gun starts a war," he said. "All kinds of weapons are used in modern warfare. Therefore you can't say there is any relationship between this weapon and any war."

To enthusiasts, the Kalashnikov is a symbol of perfection.

Sleek, light and simple, the gun has changed little since it was first manufactured and most professional soldiers who use it see no reason why it should have.

The Kalashnikov is nearly impervious to sand, water and mud—unlike many analogs. It is cheap to produce and its compact size makes it easier to smuggle than many others, all of which has added to its appeal in certain circles.

Jane's Infantry Weapons describes the Kalashnikov as the most important and widespread weapon in the world and estimates that well in excess of 50 million have been sold.

Kalashnikov, who lives on a pension worth less than 500 euros ($593) a month, has not earned a penny from the weapon because Soviet citizens were forbidden from patenting their inventions.

Readily usable

The same simplicity and reliability of the Kalashnikov that helped a poorly supplied Soviet Army fend off the Nazi invasion makes it readily usable by child soldiers in Africa and Asia.

It is a mainstay virtually—and quite often on both sides—every time war erupts in the developing world.

In some parts of the globe, Kalashnikovs are more common than refrigerators, cell phones or even indoor plumbing.

Kalashnikov is angered by questions about child soldiers, estimated by the United Nations at 300,000 in government armies, rebel forces and guerrilla groups in more than 30 countries.

"I know they exist but I have never seen one," he said, adding, "I am not the one who puts the gun in their hands. And perhaps that is a good thing."

Kalashnikov says he sometimes wishes he had invented something more useful and less obviously linked to violence, "such as a lawn mower."

But he is unapologetic and insists that his rifle has brought good into the world."

"Why do people always ask me about the damage it has brought? Many countries which have used the weapon have won themselves freedom. Look at Mozambique. On their flag, they have the AK-47," Kalashnikov said.

"Once, when I met the defense minister there, he told me that . . . soldiers returning home started naming their children 'Kalash.' Come and see, he said, in every village you will find 10 kids named Kalash. That is not an insignificant thing." *Reuters*

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Lust for blood

EDITORIAL

THE ABDUCTION and the killing last week of a Coca-Cola finance executive, Betti Chua Sy, highlights the dramatic rise in kidnapping cases that has grabbed attention from volatile political news and distressing economic developments associated with the swelling fiscal deficit. As if these problems were not enough, suddenly the public is shocked to find that law and order has rocketed as the topmost national concern as the country moves closer to the 2004 elections.

The Sy murder, described as the "worst abduction case so far this year," has put in the spotlight the administration's capacity to curb the apparent epidemic of abductions, killings and bank robberies. Her abduction was followed within days by several kidnappings in different parts of the country. It seems as if the crackdown by the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force, following the Betti Sy murder, provoked retaliatory action by criminal gangs. It's as if the syndicates are testing the task force's mettle as its head, former Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes was just warming his seat as anti-crime czar.

The crime statistics are appalling. According to Teresita Ang-See, president of the Citizens' Action Against Crime, the current kidnapping situation is the worst in 10 years, with more than 100 abductions so far this year. Reyes' figures are lower than those of Ang-See. Reyes claims that there were 83 abductions during the same period, but even then the official figures indicate a 31.7 percent rise in kidnappings during the year. Although Ang-See tends to exaggerate her figures, still the series of abductions during the past two weeks calls attention to official complacency to the worsening problem of criminality which compounds the political and economic uncertainties in the run-up to the elections.

The Chinese-Filipino community, whose members are the usual victims of abductions with ransom, has been so outraged by the brutal murder of Sy that they have clamored for the lifting of the moratorium on the death penalty, whose application has been suspended during the past four years, since the Estrada administration. The clamor of the Chinese-Filipino community is being echoed by groups who argue that executing more than 1,000 Death Row convicts at the rate of one per day would plant fear in the hearts of criminals.

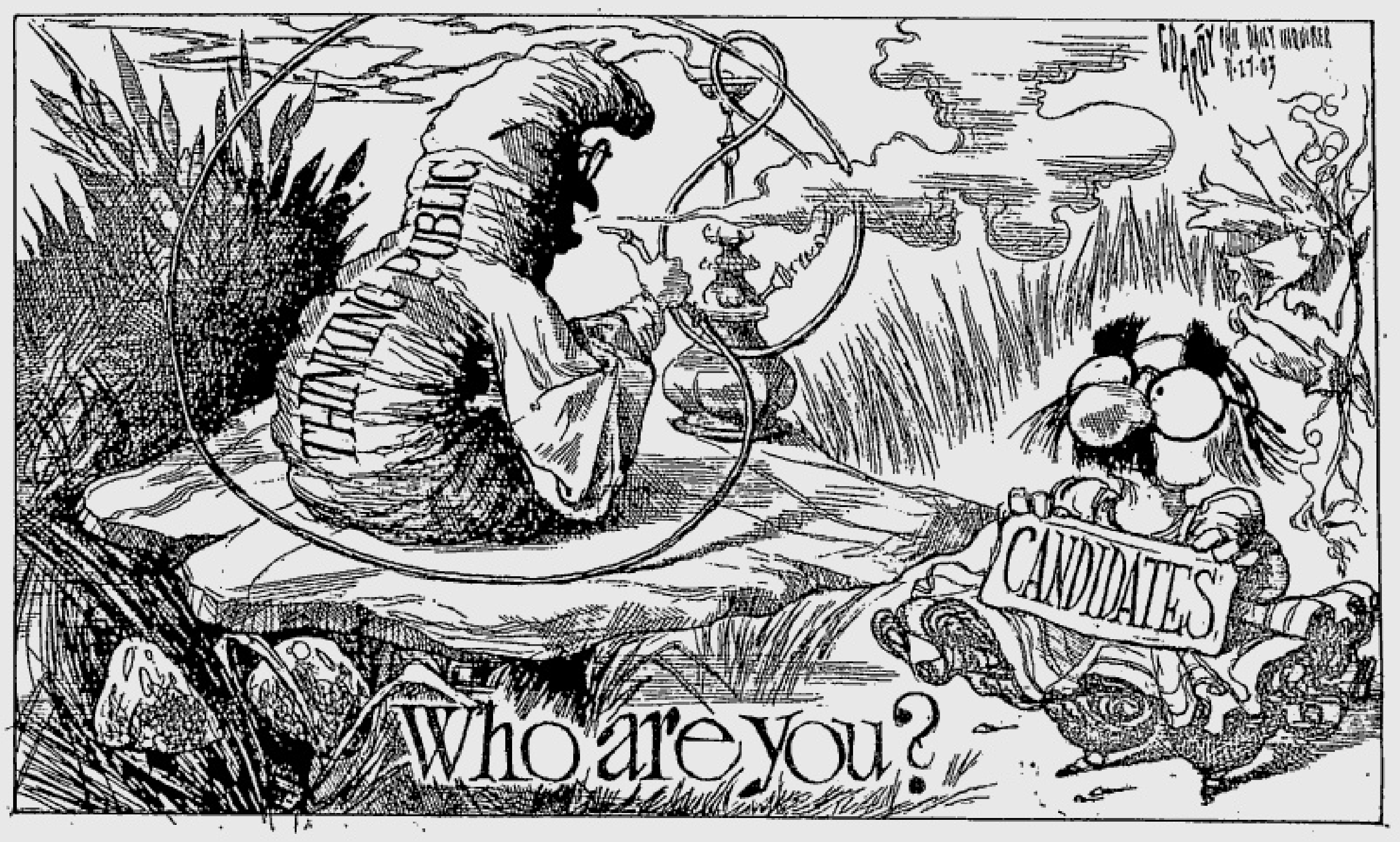
President Macapagal-Arroyo has refused to be stampeded by this lust for blood. "We have had executions in the past," she said, "and these have provided a steam valve to vent the public's ire against hardened criminals. But these executions did not stop heinous crimes."

The new wave of murder and abductions has rekindled debate over capital punishment. But scientifically assembled evidence does not support the argument that executions deter further commission of heinous crimes.

While we are no less outraged and concerned over this new outbreak of serious crimes than the families of the victims and their communities, we believe that lifting the moratorium is not the solution to this crime wave. Nor does it ensure restraint on the part of the criminal gangs.

Maintaining the moratorium does not, however, exculpate the administration from responsibility for the rise in crimes. Instead of deploying fully its police powers and resources to combat this scourge, it has swept the problem under the rug. Its focus has been distracted by other issues, including those involving the enhancement of the administration's electoral chances in 2004. It is waking up too late to the need for determined law enforcement measures, putting up of checkpoints being one of them.

Ineffective law enforcement underlines a weak government, unable to protect citizens. It encourages not only a clamor for blood but the emergence of vigilantes. A serious breakdown of law and order offers temptations for the application of extrajudicial approaches to fight criminals, making such methods acceptable to the public. The clamor for the return of capital punishment is just a step away from a call for a strong man, offering extrajudicial executions as a means to make homes and the streets safe. Unfortunately, we have plenty of such messianic characters who are quick to exploit the outrage and the failure of law enforcement agencies.



Family feud: Payumo vs the Gordons

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo should put her foot down on the feud between the Gordons and Chair Felicito Paymo of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA). Subic and Olongapo—in fact, the whole of Bataan, Zambales and Pampanga, where the two former American bases are located—are not big enough for them. They are like fighting fish thrown together in one aquarium. They fight endlessly. Just the sight or the smell or the voice of one (and in the case of the voluble Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, this cannot be avoided) is enough to fire the aggressiveness of the other.

In the present case, Payumo and the Gordons are fighting—would you believe?—over the development of Subic. Payumo wants to expand the port facilities of Subic to keep up with the growing world demand, but the Gordons don't want that for a variety of reasons.

The Gordons claim that the new port is: (1) unnecessary since the present port facilities are still "under-utilized"; (2) an environmental threat; (3) will be located in the wrong place; (4) will saddle the government with a $215 million debt; and (5) "affect the viability" of the nearby Cubi Point International Airport.

"We are not against the development of Subic," said Olongapo City Mayor Kate Gordon. "We're against the location of the proposed port." Reclamation and construction of the planned three cargo terminal berths would result in siltation, she said, and kill the coral reefs and other marine life. It would make the surrounding communities prone to flooding, too.

At last Monday's Kapihan sa Manila, Payumo and Rufo Colayco, chief of the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) in nearby Clark, refuted the claims of the Gordons point by point. The Gordons were invited to the forum, but they did not show up.

Payumo said that the Philippines is way behind our Asian neighbors in its port capacity to handle the increasing volume of container cargo traffic. Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam now have much bigger capacities than the Philippines and are still expanding their port facilities.

"Subic is located right in the middle of an international sea lane," Payumo said, but cargo ships merely pass us by and proceed to neighboring Asia ports because they have bigger ports." Container cargo ships are now much bigger to accommodate thousands of container vans but the Philippines does not have any port big enough to receive them.

"If we don't begin construction now, when?" Payumo asked. "When we have already lost all cargo traffic to our neighbors?"

Regarding the claim that the new port would be a threat to the environment, Payumo explained that the reclamation and construction area would be enclosed with barriers to reduce siltation. Besides, the environment department is studying the project's environmental impact. If the result of its study is negative, then it will not issue an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) and the project cannot go through.

The Gordons want the new port located in another area, but Payumo, showing photographs and maps, explained that this area is too small for the huge container ships of the present international cargo fleet.

With regard to the $215 million loan, Payumo said this has already been approved by the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) and all the way up to the Japanese Diet. The project has been studied and approved by our own National Economic Development Authority and by the lenders. As far as the Japanese are concerned, it is a "done deal," Payumo said, and they went to Subic to inquire what's holding up the project. "It would be a big embarrassment for us," he quoted the Japanese as saying, "if the project is aborted because no less than the Diet has endorsed it." And it may even jeopardize future loans from the JBIC, Payumo added.

On the claim that the project may affect the viability of the Cubi Point cargo airport, Payumo explained that on the contrary, the airport and the sea port will complement each other. Transfer of cargo from sea to air and vice versa would be that much faster and easier, thus saving a lot of time and money for the shippers.

As regards safety, the service roads would be below ground level, so land vehicles would not pose any threat to planes landing or taking off.

As to congestion, Payumo pointed out that there is always the bigger Macapagal International Airport in nearby Clark which can accommodate more and bigger planes.

The new port will benefit not only Subic but the whole of Central Luzon, the SBMA chief said. The plan is to develop Subic and Clark as the nucleus for the industrialization of Central Luzon. A high-speed highway will connect the two former American bases so that they will function as one.

What could be the motive of the Gordons in opposing the project?

Payumo replied: "I don't know, but it could be because they are not in charge of the project. Maybe they want to delay it until I'm out of SBMA so they can take over."

"I hear Kate is lobbying to be the next SBMA head," Payumo said as an aside. The Gordons think they still own Olongapo and Subic.

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: The Vatican apparently keeps track of what's happening in the world, including the sex adventures of pop singer Michael Jackson. It just issued a warning to Jackson that if it hears any more allegations about his molesting little boys, it would have no choice but to ordain him a priest.

Last chance

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE were two interesting news items on our front page last Tuesday.

One quoted Peping Cojuangco defending Fernando Poe Jr. "He's in fact intelligent. He's got substance. The problem is that people are saying too many nasty things about him this early. Why don't we just give him a chance and see what he can do?"

The other quoted a veteran street parliamentarian, who requested anonymity, lambasting the people who were egging Noli de Castro and FPJ to run. She advised GMA to "stop tempting" De Castro to run as her vice president and lashed out at the Lopezes for pushing him to seek higher office. De Castro has already admitted his lack of political experience, she said, why foist him on the country? If De Castro is what the Lopezes say he is, she said, why don't they put him in charge of their business empire?

She had the same things to say about the people backing FPJ. FPJ, she said, should first seek office as a barangay captain. "Everyone should listen to the wisdom of Dolphy who is content not to run for public office, admitting he has no experience in politics."

My sympathies, of course, lie with the second party, though those sympathies would increase tenfold if the source would reveal her identity. You could not have been a veteran of Edsa I and II without being courageous, or learning it along the way. I can only suppose she is with government, which prevents her from expressing her views openly about GMA. But then there is always the path of resignation. You have a boss who is so desperate to cling to power she will go to these lengths, you have no moral obligation to serve. More to the point, you have a moral obligation to yourself to get out of a situation where you are compelled to.

I've said my piece before about my fears of FPJ becoming president. None of it has to do with lack of experience in politics. Anyone who has fought his way through show biz would have had tremendous experience in politics. Show biz, like politics, is a corridor where people lie in wait to plunge a knife in your back. Of course, there is the matter of experience in public administration, which is a different thing, but that can be learned. I agree with Peping, FPJ is intelligent. If he has a good learning curve, he will learn.

The question, as I said, in a previous column, is what he will learn, given the people surrounding him, people who once produced the would-be blockbuster called "Erap Goes to Malacañang," which bombed out at the box office. What lessons can FPJ possibly learn from Erap, Danding Cojuangco and Ernesto Maceda? That Filipinos are suckers for punishment, they never learn? They can be made to love their chains? They can be made to want another Marcos or Erap?

There is yet one bigger problem with FPJ's (as yet potential) quest for the presidency. It has to do with Peping's call for Filipinos to give FPJ the chance to show what he can do. That call is all very well if we have the luxury of time. That call is all very well if we have all four quarters of a basketball game and can experiment with the second stringers. But we do not have the luxury of time. We are in the last two minutes of the basketball game, down by a huge margin and needing a big push from the best and most reliable players.

You have to be blind not to see the dire straits we have fallen into over the past years. Mutinies and scandals and impeachments having become par for the course. These are not normal times, these are desperate times. No, these are despairing times, made all the more so by the long strides countries like Malaysia have made. When the Pulse Asia survey that said 19 percent of the population wants to leave the country and live abroad came out, we had not yet had the Oakwood mutiny, the Jose Pidal exposé, the attempted ouster of Hilario Davide, the takeover of the Naia tower, the increasingly strident rallies, the killing of Betti Sy and a sudden surge in kidnappings and criminality, and very loud rumblings of a coup. I'd be terribly scared to know how people will answer the same survey now.

We always like to think that if we make a mistake now, we'll be able to correct it later on. But that's an exercise in self-delusion. It's not merely that we have already been left too far behind by the competition to make us wonder if we'll ever catch up (look at all the other Southeast Asian countries and despair!), it's that we may never get back into the race at all. Look at our situation today, and ask yourself if it isn't probably the last chance we'll get to turn things around.

I myself have always postulated that if you can have a point in development where you can take off to sustainable growth, you can have a point where you can plunge to self-perpetuating backwardness. The "stages of growth" theory does not say that, but that is a perfectly logical corollary. We can, by the same token, reach a point where everything contributes synergistically to pulling things down. We can reach a point where we cannot break out of the swirling storm, or the widening gyre, as Yeats puts it, other than by divine intervention.

I don't know that we haven't reached that point already. I don't know if I am merely refusing to give up hope amid the evidence. I do know we cannot afford to take the chance that another movie star, whose movies show him only to repeat a worn-out formula because "that is what the public wants," can make things better. And hope against hope we are not making a mistake.

A child is dying, better get a doctor than an *arbularyo*. A building is collapsing, better get an engineer than a *panday*. You'll have only one crack at preventing a tragedy. You call it wrong, your building will be gone, or your child will be dead.

That's where we are today.

Opposition split

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS Lakas spokesperson Heherson Alvarez told "Teledyaryo" when asked to react to the decision of actor Fernando Poe Jr. to contest the presidency, put it, it's good that all the hemming and hawing is over. That announcement is going to bring some stability to the political situation. But the question is, what will Sen. Panfilo Lacson do, now that the faction of Senators Edgardo Angara and Vicente Sotto has lured FPJ into the ring, in apparent disregard of the selection process? Lacson has already spent a lot of money and time since 2001 to set up a nationwide organization. It's hard to imagine him just folding up his tent.

Reports said FPJ will talk with Lacson presumably to see if they could arrive at a modus vivendi, possibly with the latter agreeing to be his running mate. But antagonisms are running high in the opposition. Makati Rep. Agapito Aquino has accused Angara of "dictatorial" practices and purging the LDP of pro-Lacson people. For instance, Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico was replaced as LDP chair in Western Visayas by Aklan's Allen Quimpo, who is not even an LDP member.

* * *

No one knows how the split in the opposition would be resolved, but it's clear that its problem is bigger than that of the administration at the moment. As Prof. Felipe Miranda pointed out in a recent INQUIRER briefing, if the opposition fails to unite, then its goal of recapturing Malacañang goes pffft. In a multi-candidate derby, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo clearly enjoys an advantage, though already the opposition seems to be preparing for this eventuality. Angara has already accused her of preparing to cheat in order to win.

* * *

What are FPJ's chances? Various surveys have placed him at No. 4, after De Castro, Raul Roco and GMA. The New York-based Roper ASW-Asia Pacific put him in fifth place among Metro Manila's *masa,* although that could be because up to yesterday FPJ was perceived as a reluctant candidate. Now that he has declared, will his rating go up?

Recently I queried my longtime *manicurista,* who went for Erap in 1998, if she'd go for FPJ this time. She shook her head and said, "*Sawa na po kami sa artista.*" There is some disenchantment for actors, but Da King also has undeniable appeal especially in the hinterlands. What is amazing at this point is how an intellectual like Angara could push FPJ when he knows the actor is simply not prepared for the presidency. *Parang walang kadadala-dala sa artista si* Angara, who stuck to Erap up to the end. What would doubtless happen to FPJ if he wins is that he'll be, like Erap, so dependent on his "advisers," many of whom only manipulated the latter for their own ends.

* * *

The political season highlights the parting of ways within many political families. The Aquinos of Tarlac were in the spotlight after Kris declared her preference for the opposition, whereas her brother Noynoy seems to lean toward GMA. Butz Aquino is a Lacson stalwart while another uncle, former Rep. Hermie Aquino, is Roco's leader in Tarlac. At the recent birthday party of veteran PR man Reli German, given by his wife Bunny and their kids in a Makati hotel, the NFA administrator during Erap's time, Edno Joson, told this columnist he was supporting Roco, a colleague of his in the 8th Congress. The other members of the clan that rules Nueva Ecija are for GMA, including Gov. Tommy Joson, Vice Gov. Eduardo Joson IV, Quezon Mayor Mariano "Boyet" Joson and his wife Rep. Josie Joson. Edno said with a smile that he might be able to persuade his son-in-law, Guimba Mayor Bopet Dizon, to go for Roco, too.

* * *

The President is in a bind over whether to end the freeze on capital punishment or not. In the light of recent high-profile kidnappings of Chinese-Filipinos, she is under tremendous pressure from Chinoy businessmen to carry out death sentences. Lacson has called for one execution of a kidnapper weekly. But GMA herself is not inclined to reinstate capital punishment, arguing that it was around for a long time without deterring kidnappers. Among those sharing this view are the Catholic bishops as well as some lawmakers like Rep. Francis Nepomuceno of Angeles City. This is not an easy dilemma, and GMA needs plenty of discernment and prayers.

* * *

PNP Metro Manila Director Reynaldo Velasco pointed out on TV that when the police squeeze the drug traffickers, the criminals go into kidnapping and bank robberies, noting that lately the crackdown on drug traffickers has yielded spectacular results. The police talk about this vicious cycle as criminal activities increase especially during the Christmas season, which this year also coincides with the start of the election season when a lot of fundraising goes on. To my mind, instead of reimposing capital punishment, there ought to be effective intelligence work against crime syndicates as well as no-nonsense prosecution in the courts. Sending criminals to prison for life should be as effective as lethal injection.

* * *

Discussing Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho's recent resignation with Housing Secretary Michael Defensor recently, he told me that one reason was that Camacho had been hurting financially. His salary as a Cabinet member is only one percent of what he used to earn as country manager of Deutsche Bank here. But I suspect that more than money, what made him throw in the towel was the tearing and nearly impossible job of taming the budget deficit. Being a banker all his life, Camacho was used to living in more serene circumstances. But Defensor stressed that Camacho's parting with GMA was not acrimonious at all; in fact he promised to undertake special jobs for her.

Confronting a culture

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WE continue with the account of F, the medical student who has accused a doctor, a resident at the Philippine General Hospital, of grave sexual harassment and sexual assault.

By 1 a.m., the party that had begun late at night in the "Ortho" department of the PGH was in full swing. F was aware that she had drunk too much and, with her blockmates, decided it was time to go home. They also decided to meet in the apartment of their male classmates to collectively answer a "sample exam" that the residents had leaked to them.

When F told Dr. M, who had "openly flirted" with her all night, that she was leaving, the doctor prevented her from joining her classmates, assuring her that he would take her home personally. She did wonder, she says in her affidavit, why her male classmates and even some other residents, including a woman resident who insisted that she join her classmates, kept asking her if she would be "all right" with Dr. M and to "take care." But she was too tipsy by then to pick up on the clues, and was hesitant to embarrass a "senior."

She told Dr. M that she was joining a study group in her classmates' apartment but that she would have to pass by her own apartment to pick up some books. But before leaving, F suddenly felt nauseous and dizzy and had to rush to the bathroom for relief.

Weak and lightheaded, F finally let Dr. M lead her to his car and drive the short distance to her apartment. Without her inviting him, Dr. M got out of the car and followed her into her apartment. In a hurry to join the study group, F entered her room to get her books without bothering to even turn on the light or close the door. As she turned to leave, she found Dr. M standing behind her, after closing the door behind him.

She may have been drunk and woozy, but F remembers quite vividly what transpired in the next few minutes, including the fact that she protested vehemently and loudly against Dr. M's "liberties." Afterwards, she says, she felt totally disconnected from her body and her self. "I could not even say in my mind the word for what had happened to me," she says.

In total denial of what had just happened, she insisted that Dr. M take her to the study group and even mustered the energy to take the exam at eight the next morning.

* * *

SHE "crashed" soon after, tumbling into bed and sleeping until midnight of the next day.

Out of compulsion, she did manage to make her rounds the day after, but when a male classmate asked her what happened the night of the "Friday Club" party, saying he sensed "something wrong" with her, she angrily brushed him off, telling him, "Don't you ever ask me that question again."

She fled to the chapel and "cried my heart out." She then called the classmate and asked him to join her there where she poured out the story of what Dr. M had done to her.

Finally coming to terms with what had happened, and feeling helpless, F sunk into a depression. She wasn't able to attend her classes and even missed a panel discussion in the following days. For the next three weeks, she recalls, "I couldn't eat or sleep, I couldn't even take a bath. I was just crying constantly."

Alarmed, a friend of hers took to dropping by every day, just to make sure that F ate and took a bath. In all, she lost 20 pounds at that time. A psychologist, to whom her friends referred her, later diagnosed F as suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. She was put on anti-depressants, and, after suffering a relapse recently, she is still under medication.

F's greatest fear at this point was that she might have gotten pregnant. Determined to make Dr. M take responsibility for his actions, she demanded that he take her to an obstetrician-gynecologist who found abrasions that are indicative of sexual assault. But even after being told this, Dr. M refused to apologize and began protesting his innocence, swearing that he had no "premeditated designs" on F, and that what transpired was "consensual."

Hearing this, F decided it was time to talk to a lawyer.

* * *

ALL this time, F couldn't bring herself to tell her parents about Dr. M's assault. But, determined to pursue her case against the doctor, she called up her mother and gave her the broad outlines of what happened. At that time, F's father, an academic researcher, was about to leave for a foreign grant, and her mother was afraid that, knowing what had happened to his daughter, he would refuse to leave.

So they kept the information from him until his fellowship was finished, and to this day, they have kept much of the details from him. He himself admits that he has never read through F's affidavit, confessing to not knowing how he would in fact react once he finds out the entire truth.

But once F decided to pursue her case against Dr. M despite the odds, her parents gave her their full support. Talking with lawyer Evalyn Ursua, who has had extensive experience pursuing cases of violence against women, they were convinced that "our daughter had a strong case." After all, she had witnesses to corroborate her story, and the UP policy on sexual harassment is quite clear on the parameters of a "proper" relationship between mentor and student, parameters which Dr. M quite obviously ventured far beyond.

F's mother now realizes she and her husband, and F, may have been too naïve to realize the odds were stacked against them, most especially the prospect of successfully confronting an entrenched culture that prizes male privilege and seniority, as well as institutional solidarity, above all. "We didn't realize that we would be up against the culture of the PGH itself," F's mother says.

Suicide is not painless

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

THERE was this pop song that became a hit among the young more than a decade ago, and it was about suicide being painless. It played on the radio the other day and I was able to jot down some lines even while I was driving. (No, I'm not suicidal.) "Suicide is painless," it began, "I can take or leave it if I please, and you can do the same thing if you wish...Suicide is painless, it brings on many changes."

The INQUIRER's resident expert on pop music was not in so I had no one to ask who popularized it.

The song's words and melody aren't as poignant as those of the all-time favorite "Vincent" which alludes to art genius Vincent van Gogh's choice to cut short his own stint in this world. "Vincent" starts with "Starry, starry night, paint your palette blue and gray," and ends with "And in that starry, starry night you took your life as lovers often do... Vincent this world was never meant for one as beautiful as you."

It is a masterpiece of eulogy set to music, like Van Gogh's paintings of sunflowers and starry nights. Now Josh Groban, a current sensation, has revived it for the young and the not-so-young generation.

Shock was the reaction of many people when they learned about the suicide last week of "AR," law student and beloved 21-year-old son of former Sen. Miriam Santiago and former Local Government Undersecretary Narciso Santiago. The questions ranged from why to why not, depending on how one interpreted the circumstances that defined AR's life and the range of his dreams.

How easy to question, how easy to put blame, how difficult to accept and grasp. "Wounded beyond words" was how AR's mother described herself in the aftermath even as she bravely philosophized before the media about her son's choice to head for the afterlife.

I spotted the book "Survivors of Suicide" by Rita Robinson at Goodwill Bookstore at the time when AR's suicide was still very much in the news. The 203-page book was expensive at P695, but I bought it because it was written by an award-winning journalist specializing in health and psychology. Good journalists write clearly, in a way that people can easily understand. They don't use jargon to obfuscate or impress.

But the title could be misleading. "Survivors" does not only refer to those who attempted suicide and survived, it mainly refers to the surviving families and friends who have to survive the tragedy and the grief.

Robinson's book draws from the experiences of the bereaved as well as those of the scientific experts, therapists, even law enforcers. The first chapters describe the impact, shock, grief and guilt of the surviving next of kin.

Very important are the suicide myths, the wrong beliefs people have about suicide. Robinson lists 17. Some of them are: that people who threaten to kill themselves don't really mean it; that there is no forewarning; that one shouldn't confront the person who is suicidal; that those who commit suicide are insane; that suicidal people want nothing more than to die; that it runs in families; that religious people are less likely to commit suicide. I wish I could list all of them here.

Who commits suicide? How does clinical depression lead to suicide? How does the brain react to depression? Getting help is very important.

The blame game is tackled, too. It is tough for those who are mentioned in suicide notes, especially if they are young. Although it is natural to blame someone, it is important for survivors not to place or accept blame.

The book gives historical perspectives and discusses ancient attitudes, the attempts to unlock the mystery of suicide and the role of societies in suicide. Perspectives from the great religious traditions are examined as well. And finally, how to prevent suicides, the role of guns, warning signs, etc.

But the most interesting, the stuff that hold the reader (as Robinson, the journalist, would know) are the true-to-life cases, the testimonies of those who've had to go through the tragedy and, in the case of suicidals, the temptation. Robinson gives suicide a human face while at the same time provides a wide perspective.

In the chapter on suicide prevention is the portion on teen suicide. Health institutions, like the Centers for Disease Control, have come up with guidelines for schools. Here are some:

It is important to stress that suicide is the result of a dysfunctional behavior by a troubled personality. Reduce the identification with the actions of the deceased, and reaffirm that it was the fault (decision) of the person who committed suicide and not someone else. And one very important thing: don't glorify the death or prolong praises and tributes for the diseased. Teenagers could get ideas, you know.

Here are media guidelines from CDC: Reporting should be concise and factual. Excessive or sensational reporting can lead to contagion. Reporting technical aspects of the suicide is not necessary. Suicide should not be presented as an effective coping strategy. Suicide should not be glorified. Expressions of grief such as public eulogies and public memorials should be minimized.

Robinson notes that the World Health Organization reported that in the last 45 years, the suicide rate has increased 60 percent worldwide. Suicide is now among the three leading causes of death of people aged 15 to 44. And according to the Surgeon General's 1999 "Call to Action to Prevent Suicide," there are an estimated 4.5 million suicide-attempt survivors in the US.

Despite hard times, the Philippines does not figure in the world's suicide list. But despite the good times (economically, that is), the wealthy nations are getting it bad in the suicide department.

* * *

Send comments to cerespd@info.com.ph

Achi Betti

YOUNG BLOOD

Wendy Ang

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

BETTI Sy, or Achi (Chinese for older sister) Betti as I called her, was abducted on Nov. 17, 2003. She was found dead inside a black plastic bag the following morning.

My father called me Tuesday morning to tell me Achi Betti had been kidnapped and killed. I was shocked and I couldn't believe it at first. I made a few overseas calls to my parents to confirm that she was really dead. I monitored the news online (since I work abroad). Until now I cannot accept that it was she who was inside the plastic bag. It is really tragic that such a good person died in such way.

Achi Betti was a very close relative. She was by far the smartest and kindest person I have ever known.

I can remember when I first felt very close to her. She was celebrating her 16th birthday, and I was about 5 years old. She was so sweet and kind that I instantly felt a strong bond between us. From that time on we became playmates. I always looked forward to spending part of my summer vacations at their house.

Achi Betti served as an inspiration when I was still studying. I always told my parents that I wanted to be like her and graduate with honors. Having her as my model never failed me because somehow I excelled in academics.

When I was planning to start a business, she encouraged and supported me. She was there to advise me and my partner about our business plans and all those financial projections. She was always ready to lend a helping hand. I and many other people could have learned more from her if she had not been killed so early in her life. I will forever remember Achi Betti as my inspiration and model.

A friend told me that maybe Achi Betti had already done her part. I do hope she did and that she's happy wherever she may be right now.

Please pray for her soul. Pray that she gets justice.

Wendy Ang, 23, works as a software developer in Singapore. She also owns an IT company in Manila.

Bad writer

Angel Flores

"I AM a bad writer."

That was what I told myself when I got back the second draft of the straight news I had written. My grade hadn't changed: it was still a 2. I had put so much effort into it and I really thought the article was interesting, but unfortunately my teacher didn't quite agree.

I ascribed all kinds of motives to her. She must be practicing favoritism, I thought, or she is looking for her own style among her students and if she does not find it, she gives her students very low grades. I even thought that she just didn't like me.

I do not know why I was bothered by such thoughts. I have not been judgmental. But then when you feel that life is rather unfair, you sometimes lose control. Probably, I was just filled with frustration then.

I was used to being praised. Back in high school, my journalism teacher made laudatory comments about my write-ups. The same was true of my English teacher who even asked me for a copy of one of my essays so that it could be published. They absolutely loved me. They loved my style and believed in my writing ability. They pushed me to write more, to share my thoughts with other people.

In college, I have met professors who also love my work. One of them actually asked me to serve as a speechwriter for a debating team at the rate of P300 per page.

I did not know compliments can be as addicting as a thunderous applause when one performs on stage. So, when I got that grade of 2 for my article, I felt degraded. I was like, "Oh my God, is this all I am worth?"

I had no other dream than to become a good and influential writer. I wanted to inspire people and motivate them. To get a grade like that was like seeing that dream beginning to slip away. It felt like I was gradually being eaten up whole by something.

Then I realized what went wrong. And it was nothing. Nothing really went wrong. I am better at creative writing than news and technical writing. I did not realize that I was already writing for a different purpose. I thought one style would suit all types of writing. I didn't know developmental writing could be difficult. For someone who is as proud as I am, it was difficult to accept.

Then I told myself, "Angel, if you want to be a good writer, then you have to make it happen." Nora C. Quebral defined development communication as communication for planned social change. It aims for the full realization of the human potential. And that was precisely what I was going to do. Before I could go out and teach others what they ought to learn, I had to first teach myself. I had to first fully realize my potentials.

I tried to do just that. I accepted the fact that even if others had hailed me as a good writer, there was still so much more to learn in this vast field. If you are a good writer, you don't necessarily remain that way. There are numerous ways to improve.

I told myself to take it easy. I told myself not to be in a hurry. I viewed myself as a diamond that must go through some tough processes before having an exquisite glitter. It did not matter how long it would take, but when the process was done I expected to be a gem.

As we go through life, we meet all kinds of difficulties and disappointments. But we should not let such obstacles deter us. We should overcome our circumstances, as our director in the Philippine Science High School Mindanao Campus always told us.

Back then, I did appreciate fully what she was saying. I even smirked every time she gave us her advice. And what she told us was this:

"Do not be victims of circumstances. We are the masters of our destinies. We can make things happen if we choose to."

Angel Flores, 19, is a Development Communication senior at the University of the Philippines Los Baños.

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Public spaces, public health

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

I FINALLY got to watch a video of "Gangs of New York" the other day and remembered some of the articles that appeared in local newspapers trying to console Filipinos by pointing out that New York, in the 1860s had terrible problems like we have today: gang wars, dirty elections and abject poverty.

I agree with that analysis, but I don't think we can just sit back and hope that in a hundred years or so, we'll become as "civilized" as New York City or the United States. No, heavens, no, societies don't develop along a single model and, in fact, I'd argue that many of the Philippines' most serious problems hound us precisely because we insist on aping the Americans.

There is, however, one aspect of New York which I wish we'd imitate, and this is the way it was able to create a mega-city while retaining a consciousness about the environment through shared public spaces. Moreover, they did this even amid the chaos and squalor that we saw in "Gangs of New York."

I'm talking here about New York's famous Central Park, which marks its 150th anniversary this year. Yes, against the violence and misery depicted in "Gangs of New York," the city actually built an oasis for city dwellers. It's a model our cities should be looking at so here's a bit of the park's history.

I'll start out by referring you back to the movie, which captures the congestion of the city. In 1850, New York City had a population of half a million. I know that's about the population of a single district in Metro Manila, but remember this was the 19th century, with almost none of the basic services we have today.

Many of the residents were migrants, escaping poverty and political turbulence in Europe. But life in New York was often even more unstable and miserable than it was back in Europe. To escape urban blight, people flocked to the city's Greenwood Cemetery, which offered some semblance of rural landscapes and tranquility.

As early as 1844, William Cullen Bryant, the editor of the Evening Post, called for the creation of a public park. Bryant saw that a park could provide a healthy refuge for urban residents. It took another 10 years before the city government began to act. Between 1853 and 1856, the city spent $5 million to buy up undeveloped land, and in 1857, it launched a public competition for a park plan.

The winning entry was the "Greensward Plan," produced by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Construction began in 1858 and was to continue for some 20 years. Out of rocky and muddy swamps, and depending mainly on manual labor and horse-drawn carts, the swamps were converted into Central Park. Some four million trees, shrubs and other greenery were planted, representing 1,400 species. Four artificial lakes were created in a landscape that tried to imitate rolling meadows.

The park has had its ups and downs and has often been the subject of political squabbling. But each decline has been followed by a renaissance. In 1934, following years of deterioration, the park was renovated to introduce recreational facilities, including 19 playgrounds and 12 ball fields. In the 1960s and 1970s, the park again deteriorated, becoming notorious for muggings. In 1980, a private non-profit organization, the Central Park Conservancy, was created to raise funds for the park's rehabilitation and maintenance. Today, the 843-acre (about 350 hectares) park has come alive again, and gets as many as 250,000 visitors in a weekend.

There are, of course, many other cities throughout the world that have given emphasis to the creation of public spaces. This is especially important in densely populated cities. China has very limited living space in cities but this is offset by large public buildings, from playgrounds to sports stadiums and libraries. Britain and the Netherlands have their parks and botanical gardens but go a step further: some cities allow residents to claim temporary rights to small plots of public land to tend small gardens. I love Brazilian cities' public dance halls, where people of all ages, sizes, genders can samba away the night. All these public spaces make a great difference for people's health, both physically and mentally.

In his book "Dead Season," American Alan Berlow notes how the Philippines gives such low priority to creating public facilities. I couldn't agree more. The very rich, with the luxury of having their own mini-parks and fitness centers within their own lavish homes, wouldn't care less about what the unwashed masses have. Drive through our rural areas and the two biggest buildings will be the Catholic church and the cockpit. Sure there's always a plaza in the *poblacion*, but with a weary-looking statue of Rizal in the center, weeds growing all around.

The city of Manila bears watching, with Mayor Lito Atienza's efforts to revive the city producing mixed results. The Metropolitan Theater continues to languish and the adjoining Arroceros Park continues to be the subject of dispute, but the Manila Bay restoration and the building of children's playgrounds in several parts of the city are commendable.

Perhaps the next step is to get private citizens more involved through something like the Central Park Conservancy. The other week, I was out on the boulevard taking in the Manila Bay sunset when I noticed that on the next table a child kept throwing pieces of paper into the bay. Her parents watched, and did nothing. I wasn't surprised. With malls dominating our concept of public space, we don't demand the creation of real public spaces for our minds and bodies. And when we do get them, like the Manila Bay area, we have nothing of the community spirit to maintain these spaces.

Maybe, with time, we will appreciate how public spaces promote public health and demand more playgrounds, parks, sports stadiums, cultural centers (note with a small "c") and libraries as our right, while learning to be responsible for nurturing those spaces so that they grow into our national psyche.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

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No special laws for homosexuals

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

I AM deeply concerned about the Act Prohibiting Discrimination Against Homosexuals.

I agree that homosexuals deserve respect and understanding because most of them did not choose their homosexual inclination. They have the right to be treated with dignity as persons.

It is good to guarantee the rights of persons. But I appeal to legislators, please do not present and justify a disorder as something right and good in itself. The bill will only serve to promote and protect homosexual activity under the cloak of non-discrimination.

And if homosexuality were normal, it does not seem logical that it should be protected by a special law. Just as being heterosexual does not bring with it special privileges. Besides the juridical recognition that the law gives to the stable union of a man and a woman (for the purposes of inheritance taxes, social security), does not merely protect sexual relations but the community of life and the upbringing of children that promotes social harmony. And any homosexual relation will never work because it does not involve any taking on of responsibility and guarantee of stability which are essential elements of the union between a man and a woman.

—GLECY G. GAMBOA,
Murphy, Cubao, Quezon City

No visa request filed or denied

THE TAIPEI Economic & Cultural Office in the Philippines dismissed the media report that the Philippine government denied the issuance of visas to Taiwan's Vice President Annette Lu and Foreign Minister Eugene Chien. This report is not true and completely unfounded. The vice president is currently busy with the domestic affairs and has no time to make a foreign trip. Chien is now visiting countries in the Caribbean region.

This office wishes to reiterate that the vice president and the minister of foreign affairs have no plan to visit the Philippines at this time or even in the near future. Since no visa applications for them have ever been filed, the saying of so-called "visa denial" is truly absurd.

—ROBERT T.J. SHIH,
director, Taipei Economic & Cultural Office in the Philippines,
2/F Low Rise Tower, Pacific Star Building, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue
cor. Makati Avenue, Makati City

Filipino fishermen, not Malaysian

I WISH to refer to your office the comments of Malaysian Ambassador Mohamed Taufik which called the department's attention on the alleged inaccurate reporting by the press on the apprehension for illegal fishing of alleged Malaysian fishermen in Mangsee. (PDI, 8/8/03)

Following the inquiry made by the Malaysian consulate general in Davao with the Naval Forces West Command (Westcom), it turned out that those fishermen were Filipino nationals. Taufik was of the view that this kind of reporting would give the impression that Malaysian fishermen habitually conduct illegal fishing in Philippine waters.

—ALICIA C. RAMOS,
assistant secretary,
Office of Asian and Pacific Affairs,
Department of Foreign Affairs,
2330 Roxas Blvd.,
Pasay City

Could Villaruel have been saved?

COMMENTS on your Talk of the Town page on Nov. 16, 2003: "How should media cover threats to security?"

The deaths of Capt. Panfilo Villaruel and Navy Lt. Ricardo Catchillar would probably be considered one of the tragic incidents in the year 2003. It was so because, according to those who knew Villaruel, he was an idealistic and conscientious man who only wanted to see honesty in government. But without the on-the-air interview by dzBB's Arnold Clavio, the incident could have been one of many tragic incidents that the public would never fully understand.

While some were thankful that Villaruel's motive was aired live albeit not really believed by many, one could argue that both men might still be alive if it were not for the hasty and long interview of Clavio.

By Clavio's own admission, the first interview went for 18 minutes and the second one, five minutes. It's always 20-20 at hindsight, but journalists like Clavio should be prudent enough to know when they should heed the call of duty or not. He had more than 20 minutes to do something to keep both Villaruel and Catchillar alive.

Clearly, the families or one of the members should have been given an opportunity to talk to Villaruel to bring some sense into the ex-Air Transport Office chief's head—he sounded incoherent at times during the interview. Furthermore, Villaruel could have shouted the words "We Surrender!" or "Don't shoot!" to the attackers. Instead he was telling Clavio, who thinks he was still doing his duty during the second call, that they were already being attacked.

It was so easy for Clavio to put the blame on the police for not rising to the occasion. The same could be said of him. The more than 20 minutes that both Clavio and Villaruel spent on the phone could have saved Villaruel's life—only if Clavio's intention was to do more than just get a scoop. To quote what he said in your report, "I did my job." Think again, please.

—VICENTE NEPOMUCENO,
vnep2003@yahoo.com

Only on impeachment matters

NOT hubris as your editorial of Nov. 9 put it but plain common sense underlined my assertion before the Supreme Court that the Impeachment Court is "higher" than the Supreme Court in matters of impeachment.

I never posited the view that the Impeachment Court is higher than the Supreme Court in all issues of legal and constitutional interpretation.

Precisely I limited my observation to "all impeachment matters." The reason is that I thought justice to Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. ought to be administered to him by a tribunal other than the Supreme Court so that people wouldn't consider it as a "hometown decision."

To assert, otherwise, would render nugatory the power of impeachment that the Constitution vested solely in the legislature.

The power of impeachment is a weapon devised by the framers for the purpose of punishing abuses by high government officials including members of the Supreme Court. Now, if as suggested by your editorial, the Supreme Court may review the actuations of the legislature that begins in the House and ends in the Senate as the Impeachment Court, obviously, that view would thwart, eviscerate and obliterate the system of check and balance ordained in the Constitution.

Simply put, our preposition runs this way: the Impeachment Court is superior to the Supreme Court in matters of impeachment only.

Errors of the House are correctable by it at the first instance or by the Impeachment Court secondarily, and thirdly by the people who may punish erring members of Congress electorally.

In fact, the House did correct itself, albeit after the Supreme Court had declared the impeachment complaint unconstitutional. Purely as an academic issue, then, I still maintain that if it is recognized that the Supreme Court has the power to review the acts of the House or of the Senate as the Impeachment Court in matters of impeachment, one might as well say goodbye to the only constitutional weapon against judicial or other high officials' abuse of powers.

The Supreme Court, however, has already adjudged the issue. As a law-abiding citizen, I bow to it. But as a lawyer, I think that its rationale is as full of holes as the best Edam cheese from Holland: delicious to eat but can raise one's blood pressure levels to boiling point.

—SEN. AQUILINO Q. PIMENTEL
6/F Senate of the Philippines,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2003

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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'Jose Pidal' bent on running in '04

By **Carla P. Gomez**, *PDI Visayas Bureau*

BACOLOD CITY—The brother-in-law of President Macapagal-Arroyo, Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo Jr., who claimed he is the controversial Jose Pidal, is bent on running for a seat in the House of Representatives in Negros Occidental even if the incumbent, a party mate in the Lakas-CMD, has announced he was seeking a third term.

Arroyo Jr. said on Tuesday that he would not give up his own plan to run for a seat representing the province's fifth district even if incumbent Rep. Jose Apolinario Lozada has decided he would seek a third term instead of running for senator.

"Let the best man win," Arroyo said in a telephone interview Tuesday.

This even if Lozada, who is an original founding member of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats (Lakas-CMD), said that the party rule clearly stated that the equity of the incumbent should be honored in choosing an official candidate of the party.

Arroyo, who is the party chair in Western Visayas, however, said that while there is a rule on the equity of the incumbent, the party has a selection committee that decides on a case-to-case basis, and takes into consideration, among others, loyalty to the party.

But if he could not run as the Lakas candidate, Arroyo said he could join the Liberal Party or the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC).

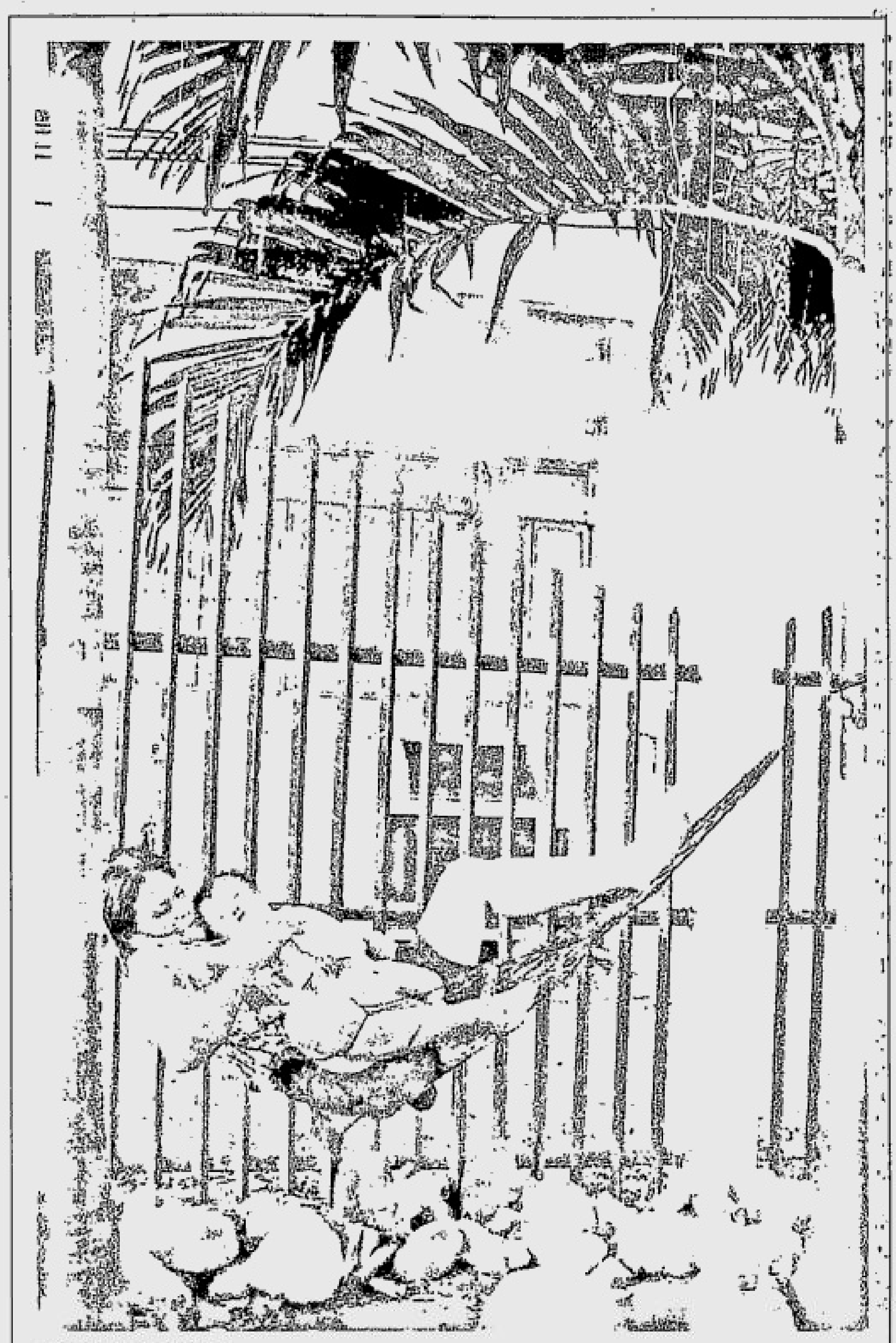
The United Negros Alliance (Una), the regional party identified with the NPC and also founded by businessman Eduardo Cojuangco, has a coalition with the Lakas that also honors the equity of the incumbent.

Arroyo burst into national limelight in September when he came out to say that he was Jose Pidal and not his brother, First Gentleman Miguel Arroyo, as claimed by Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Lacson, in August, accused the First Gentleman of allegedly laundering P270 million from President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign contributions, some of which were kept in bank accounts under the name Jose Pidal.

Ignacio had said Lacson knew that he owned the Jose Pidal accounts but still linked these to his brother to discredit the latter.

At that time, Arroyo was already the ruling party's regional chair and had already discussed within private circles in Negros Occidental his intention to run for a House seat in the province.



QUALITY TIME

BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

A man spends time with his child resting in a hammock inside the Osmeña Park in Davao City.

4 dead as van falls off cliff

BAGUIO CITY—A van bound for Sabangan, Mt. Province, plunged off a 120-foot cliff along the provincial road in Bontoc town on Tuesday afternoon, killing four of its passengers.

An hour earlier, a bus bound for Bontoc also fell into a 10-foot ravine along another road in the same town. Six passengers were hurt in that crash, according to reports of the Office of Civil Defense here.

Police have yet to establish why the van, driven by Dario Pilacan, slipped off the road at Barangay Kadchog in Bontoc at 3:30 p.m. Killed were Pilacan, Michael Bubidang, George Mangay-an and Raymund Palecos.

OCD reports said the Rising Sun bus slipped off the main road at Sitio Ficoco in Barangay Samoki at 2:30 p.m.

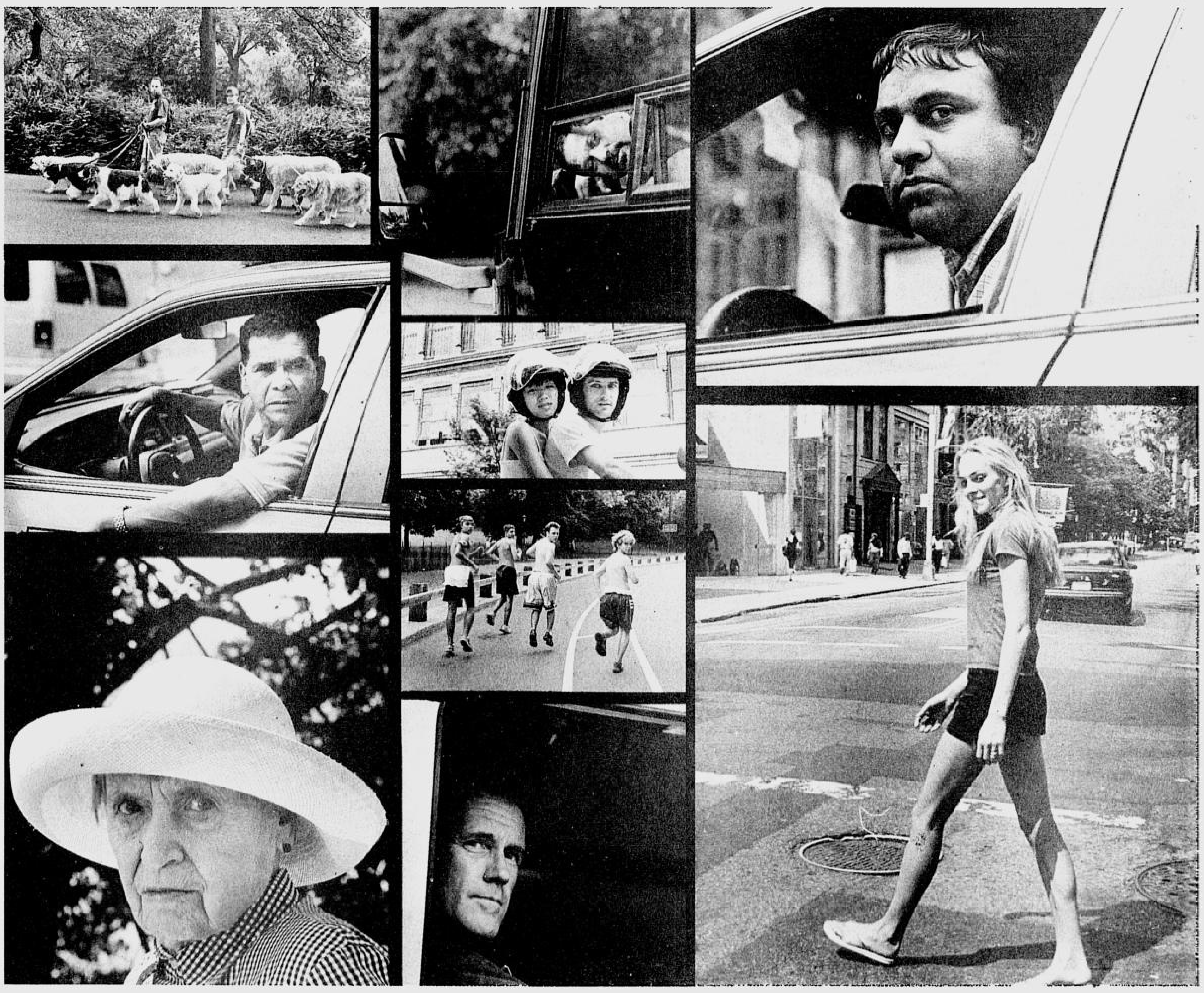
The crash injured Caroline Anongos, Jona Cofulan, Heidi Atin, Bennie Samoy, Denden Malamnao and Benjie Pagtailan. They were taken to the Bontoc General Hospital for treatment. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Yasay to run for senator to reform stock market

DAVAO CITY—Former Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) chair Perfecto Yasay who on Sunday said he was running for senator in next year's polls said his main platform would be implementing reforms in the stock market for investment to come.

Yasay said the SEC "must be free from any political influence." He said the much-needed reform in the SEC is one way to restore business confidence among investors.

"We must create an atmosphere that would promote business growth," he said. *Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



Everyone can take a look.

SHIFT_the future NISSAN

Lawyer shot dead as he lay in his hospital bed

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

INABANGA, Bohol—A lone gunman shot dead a lawyer inside his room at about 12:30 p.m. Monday at the Francisco Dagohoy District Hospital (FDDH), about 74 km north of Tagbilaran City.

Lawyer Ramon del Rosario, 47, of Barangay Sweetland, Buenavista town, died of eight bullet wounds in the body.

Police said a .45 cal. pistol was used to kill Del Rosario.

FDDH staff nurse Elizabeth Vestal said a man casually approached her and asked for Del Rosario's room.

Vestal said that after asking for instructions to the Medicare ward where Del Rosario was staying, the man entered the room just a few paces from the nurses' station.

"We heard a single shot which led somebody to remark that Christmas was indeed drawing near," Vestal added.

This was, however, immediately followed by a series of gunshots.

A witness said the man who emerged from Del Rosario's room after the shooting wore a black bonnet and hid the gun under his shirt. The suspect was about 40 years old, brown-skinned and with medium built.

Another witness said the man's pace was hurried when he was outside the FDDH and rode a motorcycle that sped toward Buenavista.

Dr. Greg Julius Sodusta, FDDH chief, said they tried to revive Del Rosario but he died at about 1 p.m.

PLAYGROUND TOOTS SOBERANO
A monument of Emilio Aguinaldo serves as a playground area for children in Baguio City.

Fears raised of new hike in LPG prices

FEARS were raised yesterday of a new round of increases in prices of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) as a group of LPG refillers protested what they said were unjust penalties imposed on them by the energy department.

In a statement, the LPG Refillers Association of the Phils., a group of 100 LPG refillers nationwide, said they are fighting the energy department circular because it would force them to jack up prices and pass these on to consumers.

The new circular imposes a penalty of P24,000 for every tank found under-refilled which the refillers' group described as unjust.

Judge Alicia Marino-Co of the Pasig City Regional Trial Court had declared the energy department circular void but the department appealed the ruling to the high tribunal.

ROUNDUP

Village chief slain

SAN MIGUEL, Bulacan—A village chief was gunned down in Barangay Magmarale here on Nov. 16. Police said Ricarte Valdez, 42, barangay chair of Pacalag, was on his way home aboard his motorcycle when an undetermined number of suspects attacked him. Valdez died of bullet wounds in the head and chest. Police are looking into reports that the attack was due to a land conflict in Valdez's village. *Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

2 NPA rebels slain

CAMP MELCHOR DELA CRUZ, Isabela—Two New People's Army rebels were killed while five others were arrested after an eight-hour gunfight between soldiers and the rebels in Maddela, Quirino, on Nov. 10, Army reports said. Maj. Gen. Samuel Bagasin, commander of the Army's 5th Infantry Division, said at least 50 members of the NPA's Benito Tesorio Front led by Martin Dolado alias Ka Elmo/Ka Maeng were patrolling the mountains of Barangay San Dionisio in Maddela when they encountered the soldiers. Reports from the Army's Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) said the soldiers recovered two bodies from the clash site. In Bulacan, a suspected NPA rebel was killed while several others were believed wounded during a 10-minute gunfight with Army soldiers and policemen in Barangay Nabaong Garlang, San Ildefonso on Nov. 9. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Fish trader, son killed

PARANG, Maguindanao—Masked gunmen killed a fish trader and his son Sunday night in Barangay Landasan after robbing them of some P5,000. Police identified the victims as Raul Lopez, 47 and his son Gino, 7. Virginia, Raul's wife, said they were on board a jeep heading for home when a man flagged down their vehicle at 9 p.m. by firing their rifles. Virginia, who was slightly hurt in the attack, said before leaving, the gunmen also fired more shots at her husband. *Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

2 die in road crash

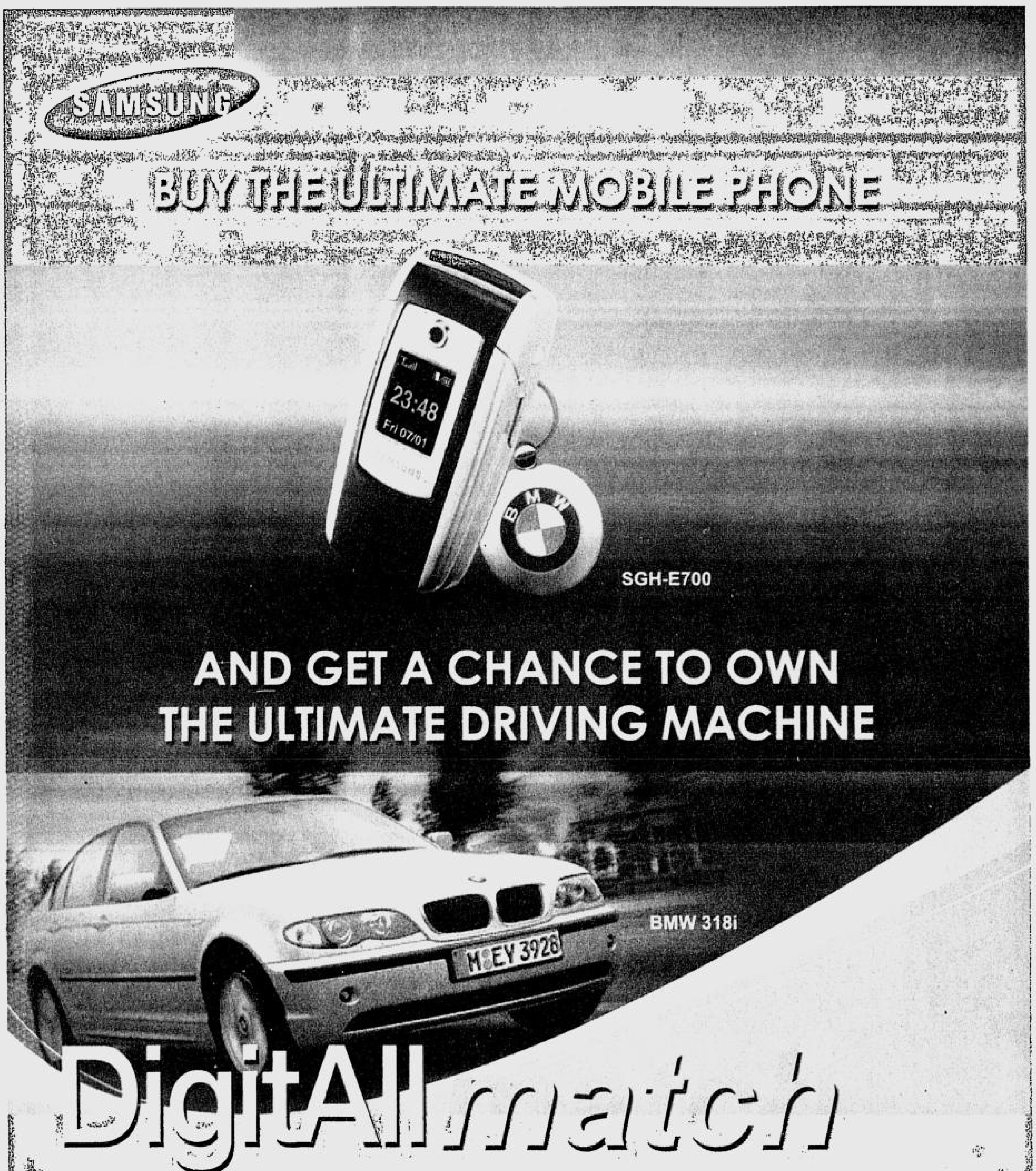
LAOAG CITY—Two women were killed and five others were hurt after a bus hit four parked jeepneys and a tricycle here Tuesday. Police said Mary Rose Ulep, 28, and Catherine Agustin, 21, died instantly after they were hit by the jeeps that the Metro Manila-bound RCJ bus had hit. Reports said the bus was on its way to its terminal here when its driver lost control of the vehicle. SPO4 Cesario Gabriel, the city's traffic chief, said bus driver Bernard Castillo fled. *Gerriahzon Sebastian, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Rebel slain in clash

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—The Army reported killing a New People's Army rebel in an encounter Wednesday in Dingalan, Aurora. Col. Jovenal Narcise, commander of the 702nd Infantry Brigade, identified the slain rebel as Jose Buendia alias Ka Joe of the NPA's Nueva Ecija provincial party committee's Guerrilla Front 1. Narcise's report said Army soldiers wounded several other rebels in the 10-minute gunfight that broke out at 5:30 a.m. A .22 cal. rifle was recovered from the encounter site. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

20 hurt in mishap

BAGUIO CITY—Twenty-one persons were hurt Wednesday when a bus bound for Baguio plunged into a ravine in Kapangan, Benguet, the Office of Civil Defense said. The Dangwa bus was negotiating a slippery incline at Sitio Buyot in Barangay Balacbac in Kapangan when it fell 129 feet below. The injured were taken to the Benguet General Hospital. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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8. The winner must present at least two (2) valid identification cards such as driver's license, SSS, TIN, school or company I.D., birth certificate and the letter of notification when claiming the prize.
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CURIOSITY

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

A toddler tries to touch an artwork resembling a face in a popular coffee shop in Baguio City. The child was in Baguio with her parents who attended the 18th Ad Congress.

Gay couple wed clandestinely

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Theirs may not be the first same-sex wedding in the country, but a gay couple in this city said they wanted to profess their love for each other amid the prevailing homophobia among most Filipinos.

Alex and David wore the traditional Barong Tagalog during their clandestine wedding in the city on Monday night. The couple and their guests pinned red ribbons to commemorate the World AIDS Day celebration on Dec. 1.

"Our wedding is not only a statement against homophobia, but it's also a statement about awareness on AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) because gay people are also affected by the disease," David, 33, told the INQUIRER.

The ceremony was officiated by Fr. Richard Mickley, superior of the Order of St. Aelred.

Mickley, who has officiated more than 100 same-sex weddings in the past seven years, said it took the Order of St. Aelred, a monastery of gay priests and lesbian nuns, which he helped put up seven years ago in the country, to proclaim God's unconditional love.

Their group, he said, provides a support system for gays and lesbians who are often discriminated.

Unlike traditional weddings, Alex and David excluded the best man, flower girl and bridesmaids from their entourage because, they said, "this was traditionally sexist."

Instead, the entourage was composed of adult ring bearers and lesbian partners who carried their "veil" (actually a rainbow flag known internationally as a symbol of gay and lesbian pride).

"My partner and I are not role-playing. We are both gays and we take pride on the decision to marry even if our current laws do not recognize this right," David said.

He said a growing number of gay people are entering into relationships and raising their own families "with or without state-sponsored gay legislation."

"If I only knew it would be this beautiful, I would have suggested to have gotten married earlier. I am so happy right now," Alex, 34, said.

The couple met in Manila six years ago through their common friends and fell in love.

David works for a Baguio-based nongovernment organization while Alex is a manager for a housing-related firm.

David was among the gays who formed the Gays and Lesbians for the Immediate Tsugi of Erap (Galit-Erap) in 2001.

Unlike weddings solemnized in Catholic and Christian churches, the union of gays does not require legal documents, David said.

"God doesn't ask us to secure a legal permit before he blesses us. His love is universal and unconditional," he said.

"This is probably the best wedding in the whole world. I see two men who demonstrated their love for each other," Mickley said.

Cebu traders fear effects of shortage of electricity

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Businessmen here expressed alarm over the series of power outages that hit Metro Cebu because of a shortage in electric supply.

Carlos Co, Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) president, said some foreign investors indicated they would pour their money somewhere else if the power situation in Cebu would not improve.

He said in an interview over radio station dyLA that he received phone calls from foreign investors, mostly from the United States, informing him about their sentiments on the current power crisis.

"That's very alarming to everybody because we are receiving notices from foreign investors that they will not continue investing here if the (power) situation continues," Co said over dyLA yesterday.

He stressed the need for an immediate solution to the problem, albeit temporary.

One of these was the bringing in of power barge from Navotas to Cebu. The power barge is owned by the East Asia Utilities, which is also part-owner of the Cebu Private Power Corp. (CPPC).

Co said they would negotiate with East Asia on the price although he initially learned that its generating cost could reach more than P4 per kilowatt-hour.

Co said they will ask President Macapagal-Arroyo to allow the National Power Corp. (Napocor) to subsidize the total cost.

If this could not be done, Co said they had no other option but to ask Energy Regulatory Commission to adjust the power rates of the Visayas Electric Company.

The barge can bring in an additional 60 megawatt, enough to support the power situation in Cebu.

Lapid says he'll stick it out with GMA candidacy

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

PORAC, Pampanga—Between Da King and the Kabalen (provincemate), which camp is movie actor and Gov. Manuel "Lito" Lapid on?

"*Kahit na lumaban si FPJ, kahit pa malaki ang utang na loob naming mga Lapid sa kanya, dito pa rin kami sa* Lakas, *kay* GMA (In the event FPJ runs and even when the Lapid family owes him so much debt of gratitude, we are sticking with the Lakas, with President Macapagal-Arroyo)," the governor said here on Monday.

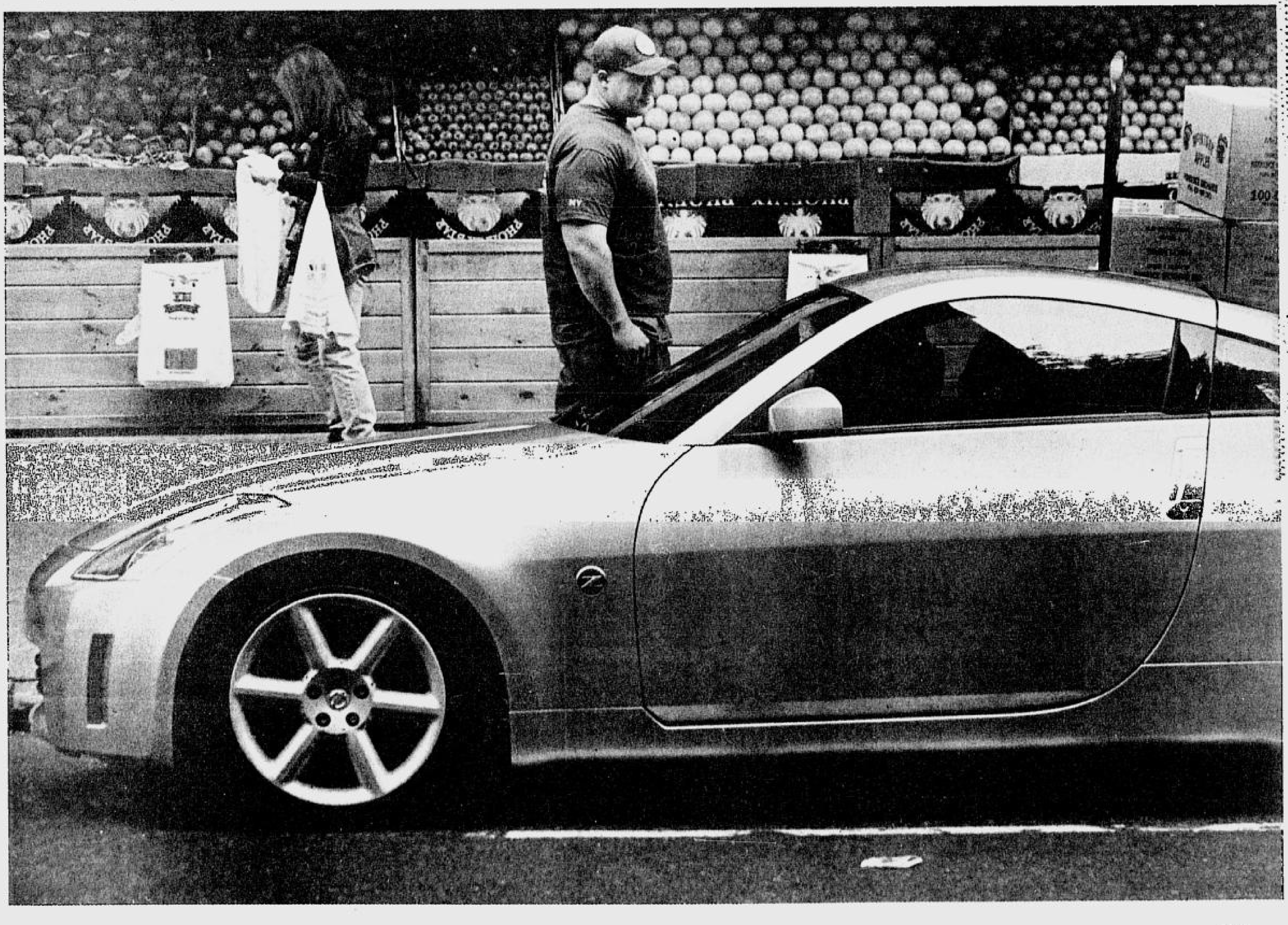
"*Naka*-stick, *talagang* GMA *ako*," he added.

Asked why he was remaining loyal to the President, the 46-year-old governor gave two reasons. First, he said Ms Macapagal is a fellow Kapampangan. Second, he said she has done well in helping the flood-prone province.

To this governor who barely finished high school and who was thrown in the political arena in 1995 when the clout of the Nationalist People's Coalition waned in the province, the deciding factor was mainly for ethnic reason.

"*Tayong mga* Kapampangan *hindi natin ipagpapalit ang kapwa* Kapampangan. *Kadugo natin yan*," Lapid said of the President whose father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, was from Lubao town.

The line already drawn, the governor said he hoped that Poe, whom he regards as a father, would understand his decision.



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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor **Jun Bandayrel**
Bureau Chief **Floreño G. Solmirano**

Trade hub rises from once NPA lair

By Michael B. Jaucian
Ligao City

THE UPLAND villages of Tupas, Uma-Uma, Tandarora, Tiongson, Badbad and Busac in Ligao City used to be an isolated forested area in Albay.

There were no roads and fast transportation means, making it difficult for villagers to go to town to sell their farm produce. People travel by foot or use a cart pulled by a carabao to bring their vegetables and copra to the market, wasting too much of their time and effort on travel alone.

Worse, their income from sales was not worth all the trouble. Some of the villagers chose to consume their own products. With less economic activity, they were left idle most of the time. The situation became attractive to New People's Army guerrillas.

New picture

Today, the picture is different. A mini-economic zone has been established in the 10-hectare area, and it has been operating for almost two years now.

Called the Upland Central Economic Zone, the place serves as trading center of the six villages, whose combined population is 5,000. Located 22 km from the city proper, it lies 350 meters above sea level.

Although the ecozone's structures are made mostly of anahaw and coconut lumber, business establishments, such as copra trading outlets, a bakery and retail variety stores have sprouted.

Thirty to 40 motorcycles now pass through the concrete farm-to-market roads connecting the villages. Jeepneys and trucks that haul copra and other farm crops to and from the zone. The roads are linked to a 5-meter-wide, 12-km thoroughfare originating from the national road.

WHAT used to be a hotbed of the communist insurgents in the upland of Ligao City has now become a beehive of economic, social and religious activities.

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

With its accessibility to the city proper, the once barren and seemingly abandoned place has become a beehive of economic, social and religious activities.

The government has also provided electricity, put up a source of potable water, and set up a satellite dish that provides cable TV connection to the villagers' homes.

"The local government only provided the basic services as mandated by law, but the other structures and the means of transportation were provided by the villagers themselves," said Mayor Fernando Gonzales.

Gonzales stressed that one important thing that evolved was that the villagers were now earning more from their produce and the money no longer left but was circulating in the area.

Purisima Ponting, 56, a businesswoman, said that when the local government built the economic zone, the lives of the villagers improved a lot.

Everyone now has an opportunity to work and earn a decent living, she said.

Ponting said coping with the basic needs of her family was no longer a burden for her, compared to the old days.

Urban life

The villagers' way of life is no different from that of city folk. Villagers who used to be timid have become confident and sociable.

Gonzales said one of the factors that contributed to this progress was the villagers' spiritual transformation. Every Sunday, a priest and his small choir visit the place and say Mass, which is religiously attended by the villagers.

"Another good thing is that, [no matter how] tired they are at the end of the working day, the people gather together to participate in social activities, such as playing ball games, singing and dancing," the mayor said.

Children aged 3 to 5 have been given education. Aside from learning catechism, their talents and skills have been enhanced by teachers in the day-care center.

At night, everyone enjoys watching the news and soap operas, which are shown on a cable-ready, wide flat television set positioned on a concrete table near the basketball court.

Trading center

Rodillo Lajara, 46, a businessman, said the place served as a converging point for buyers and sellers of coconut, copra, peanut, palay, livestock, pineapple and other high-value crops.

Since the economic zone became operational, his business has improved and has helped his fellow villagers, he said.

"The villagers need not spend money and time in going to the city just to buy their necessities because my store has all the goods needed for daily human consumption," Lajara said.

He said the mini-economic zone has indeed alleviated poverty in the area.

Villagers said pork, chicken and fish were cheaper in their place than those sold in the city.

Because of the low prices of products, more investors and businessmen are encouraged to visit the place.

"One of the best effects of this project is that the process of attaining peace is almost at its peak," Gonzales claimed.

He said that if everybody was busy and earned a decent living, the chance of joining the NPA was reduced. "If the government would provide for the needs and wants of the people, for sure there would be no insurgency," he said confidently.

Lipa folk long for pipe organ's heavenly music

By Mei Magsino
Lipa City

SINCE the pipe organ of the San Sebastian Cathedral in Lipa City was repaired in May, residents and their guests have once again heard heavenly music from the church.

But the instrument, the only one of its kind in Batangas and one of only 59 in the Philippines, needs more than just repairs and rehabilitation. It needs maintenance and an expert organist who will play it regularly for 10 years in order to bring its music back to its original quality.

Rodel Garcia, 24, is the only remaining organist in the cathedral from the original group of three, and he is still training at the Las Piñas Bamboo Organ under the tutelage of international organist Armando Salarza. Salarza studied in Austria for 10 years.

"The pipe organ is the king of all musical instruments and being able to play it expertly is considered the highest level of performance any musician in the know could attain," Garcia said.

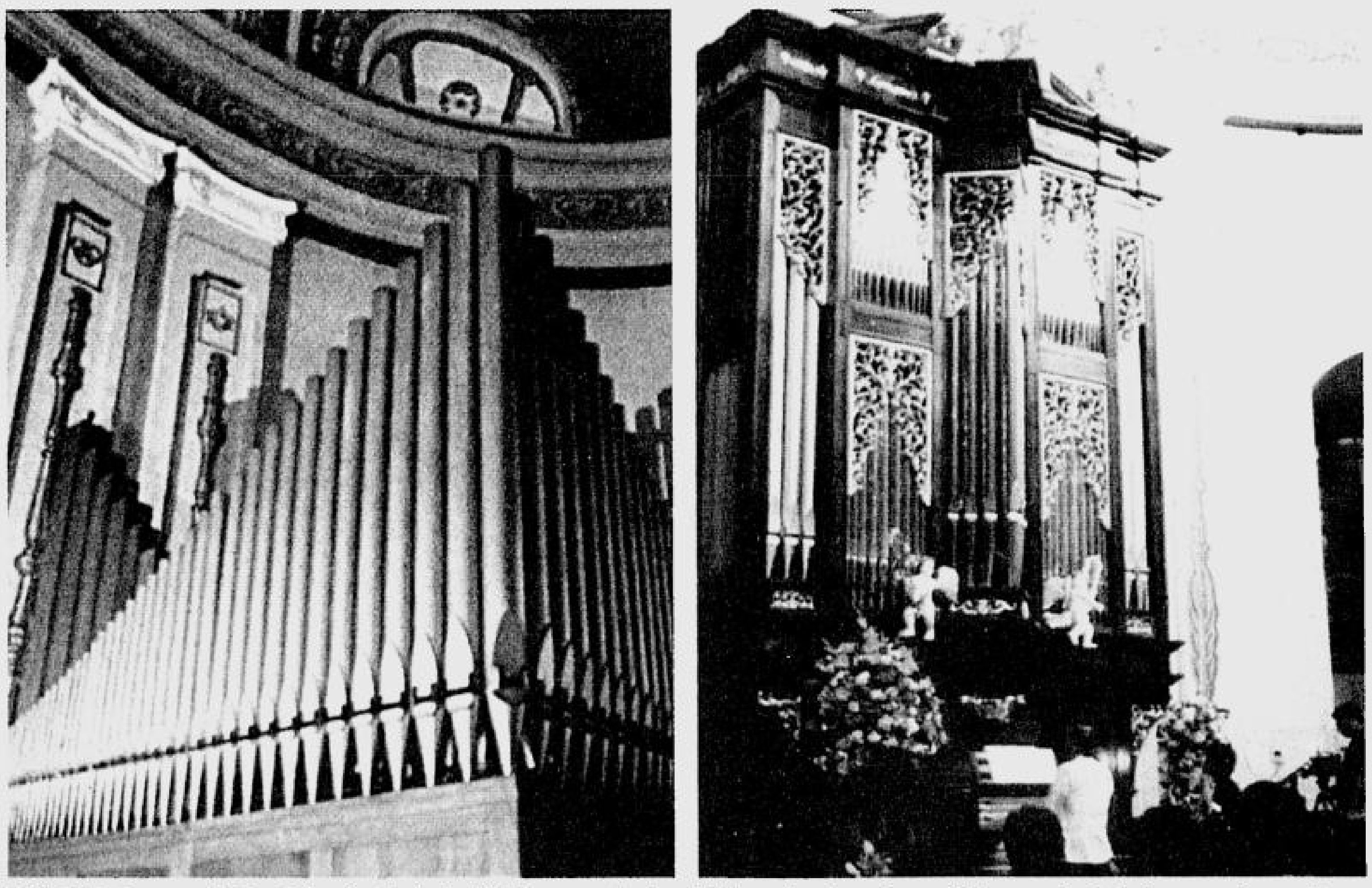
But his four years of studying the instrument is not yet enough. It takes two years to know how to play the pipe organ, but it takes 10 years before any seasoned musician can perfect the art, he said.

"I'm nearing my fifth year here as the only pipe organist in the cathedral, and here, I learned the real meaning of sacrifice for the sake of art," Garcia said. "The sacrifice also meant devotion to the music that is a dream for all musicians."

Daily sacrifices

Garcia, who is under the scholarship of the San Sebastian Cathedral Pipe Organ Foundation, has been doing the same things for the past four years since he started to learn how to play the pipe organ.

"I wake up at five in the morning, walk for about 45 minutes to the highway, get a jeepney ride to the cathedral, and play," he said. "And when there was no more Mass, I would take my time to play and play continuously to train myself. Once a week, I go to Las Piñas for my lessons."



THE OLD pipe organ in San Sebastian Cathedral (left) was repaired, rehabilitated and transformed into a mechanical pipe organ in a matter of 18 months. The repaired pipe organ serenaded Lipa City churchgoers last month.

MEI MAGSINO

He said he used to be a music teacher at the De la Salle University in Lipa but had to give up the high-paying job to study the instrument.

The decision was not a good move financially. But Garcia, who has been suffering from polio since he was a year old, said he wanted to prove that someone like him could be an acclaimed pipe organist some day.

"I want to have my own pipe organ concert, maybe in 10 years. And I want the world to know that even if I limp when I walk, I can produce the best music they've ever heard," he said. "I know the sacrifices it entails, but I'm ready to make this pipe organ sing."

Playing also demands a lot of time and effort. Even the musician's shoes should be custom-made for the pipe organ.

"Our shoes are supposed to slide on the pipe organ's foot keys as we play it," Garcia pointed out. "In playing the pipe organ, you need to have not just the talent for music but the spirit, too. And oh, don't forget the precision. Because here, you just don't use your hands, you also use your feet when you play."

Garcia said the financial assistance given by the foundation was not enough for an ambitious musician to live by. "But if you are devoted to the art, the financial side doesn't matter. Even so, I always pray that we can have more resources and that the foundation could send me to Austria to learn more," he said.

German-made

Records from the San Sebastian parish church said the 16-stop electrical system organ was imported from Germany in 1969 and installed by the famous Jose Loinaz, a Spanish organ technician who also set up other organs at that time in Manila.

The instrument then cost about $50,000. It was donated by Julita Kalaw Olaguivel from one of the richest families in the city upon the request of then parish priest Msgr. Domingo Librea.

It was installed at the original choir loft, at the elevated area at the rear of the main nave opposite the altar.

In the early '80s, the organ was repaired and moved to its present location at the right side of the sanctuary.

Immediately after it was installed, the Vatican Council included in its Decree on Sacred Liturgy 120 the order that "the pipe organ is to be held in high esteem in the Latin Church, for it is the traditional musical instrument the sound of which can add a wonderful splendor to the Church's ceremonies and powerfully lifts up men's mind to God and higher things."

Pipe organs, especially those with mechanical systems, could last for hundreds of years.

In a church like the San Sebastian, the presence of the pipe organ is a grand work of art that is pleasing to the ears, as well as to the eyes.

One interesting aspect is its uniqueness. No two pipe organs in the world are the same. Each is always a unique creation as it is the only musical instrument whose form, in contrast to all other instruments, has no norm. It is this freedom that gives the pipe organ its interesting and unduplicated sound, and its countless design that remains over the centuries.

Repair

During the last decades, the pipe organ has slowly deteriorated.

When Lipa parish priest Msgr. Alfredo Madlangbayan discovered its sad state, he immediately spearheaded a campaign to raise funds for its repair and rehabilitation.

"The pipe organ has created a very important part in my heart. I was the assistant parish priest of Lipa when it was acquired," Madlangbayan said. "We need to protect this legacy that is the only one of its kind in the province."

Rehabilitation of the organ and its conversion into a mechanical one, like the bamboo organ of Las Piñas, started in 2001.

The famed Diego Cera Organbuilders Inc., the first organ builder in the country, with intensive training in Austria and Germany, was tapped for the job. Together with Salarza, Organbuilders made the stoplist for the pipe organ ideal for local church music, as well as the design to suit major pipe organ repertoire.

The additional new pipes were manufactured in Germany and all materials of high-quality tin-lead alloy for pipe making were imported from Europe. The pipes will never rust.

Three organists

After the rehabilitation, which took one and a half years, a pipe organ concert was held last May. The event made Lipeños proud as they heard the king of all musical instruments sing again.

On Nov. 14, internationally acclaimed organist from Spain, Josep Mas i Bonet, and the Coro Tomasino performed at the cathedral and serenaded incoming Archbishop of Manila Gaudencio Rosales, Madlangbayan, priests, laity members and guests from all over the country.

Coincidentally, Ricardo Mazo Jr., conductor of the Coro Tomasino, also studied pipe organ in Germany.

That night, three pipe organists were in the Cathedral—Bonet, who performs in concerts; Mazo, who now conducts a choir; and Garcia, who's still studying to perfect the art.

It is said that when a musician masters the pipe organ, like Mazo, he could conduct a perfect choir, as he already knew everything about music.

Proceeds of the concert went to the foundation. But even the amount has not been enough to keep the music playing.

When the parish started a foundation that will maintain the pipe organ and train future organists like Garcia, the plan didn't stop there. It also aimed to one day create an internationally acclaimed organist, like Salarza and Mazo.

And this time, he will be from Lipa.

'Da King' is running for president

WHO are these guys? Aside from Sen. Tito Sotto and FPJ's wife, Susan Roces, the people seen milling around the Philippine movie action king were relatively unknown.

ERIK ARAZAS

From page A1

ence at the Manila Hotel that was sporadically interrupted by applause and cheers from his supporters.

He said yesterday was the day when he had to face the hardest decision of his life.

Asked why he was running for president, Poe said: "I'm sincere, dedicated, and I love my country."

He acknowledged that his "qualifications" to run the country might be "not as much" as the others, but he appealed to the people "to give me a chance, probably I can prove [to be] better."

He promised to present his program of government and his proposed economic team "in due time."

Legarda welcomed Poe's announcement of his intention to run for President.

"I think that augurs well for our people because it is now clear who are running and what they stand for," she said. "I'm not surprised. I knew it was coming. I had information that he was to declare by the end of the month. Now the lines are clear."

Danding's NPC

The Nationalist People's Coalition of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. is backing Poe's candidacy, according to Manila Rep. Harry Angping, NPC chair for the vote-rich National Capital Region.

"The party is convinced that FPJ is the best bet against President Macapagal-Arroyo," Angping said. "GMA is no match for FPJ. FPJ is the most 'winnable' among opposition candidates."

This early, Angping is predicting that Poe's election rivals will eat dust in May 2004.

"Most probably by a landslide," he said of the nature of Poe's projected victory at the polls.

Poe was once the star endorser of San Miguel beer, flagship product of the Cojuangco-chaired food and beverage giant, San Miguel Corp.

Cojuangco, himself once touted as a presidential candidate, declared Tuesday night that he would not join the race, according to Reuters.

"I am not [running]," the 68-year-old tycoon told reporters at a private party when asked if he would run. "We will just leave it to others."

But Cojuangco, who is dubbed "kingmaker" because of his financial clout and links with leading Filipino politicians, said he had not decided whom to support in 2004.

Few familiar faces

Poe's news conference had few familiar faces in politics and even in the entertainment industry.

The only politician present was Sotto, who presided over the news conference.

Among the entertainment personalities were Richard Gomez, Armida Siguion-Reyna, Amay Bisaya, Eric Espina and Poe's younger brother, Conrad.

Also present were the leaders of such groups as the Freedom, Peace and Justice Movement, the FPJ for President Movement and the Lawyers for FPJ Movement, as well as student and business organizations.

Still, the mood was that of an election campaign, with Poe's supporters, including Linggoy Alcuaz, distributing stickers bearing the message "FPJ na Poe" and ID cards for FPJ groups.

Poe said one of the reasons he entered politics was to help unite parties and groups because he might find a way to do so.

"Maybe I can do something because I am not a politician," he said.

He also said he had been consulting people on entering politics, and on his weaknesses and capabilities.

"I have to know all of that. I have to be true to myself," he added.

Lucky day

Poe said he timed his announcement yesterday because the end of the month was his "lucky day," and it was the eve of the birthday of his late father, for whom he was named.

Asked whether he timed his announcement for the end of the Islamic fasting month, he merely greeted all Muslims a "happy Eid'l Fitr."

The actor found himself being asked what he would do with the plunder case of deposed President Joseph Estrada, his close friend. *(See story on Page A1)*

He said that Estrada's case was in the courts and that it was too early to make any comment because his friend had not been convicted of the crime and he himself had not been elected president.

Roces said she was at her husband's side to support him on his candidacy.

She said she had not changed her mind about her dislike for politics but that she wanted to do service for the people and the country.

"My husband Ronnie and I are supportive of each other on whatever we do," said Roces.

People's candidate

She said that as a Filipino, she believed that it was the duty of all Filipinos "to serve the country in the best way we can."

In a phone interview, Sotto said Poe, party-less for now, was "the candidate of the people."

He said the LDP had invited Poe to join the party but that the latter was still considering it. He said the actor's supporters were not keen for Poe to join a political party for now.

In the next five to seven days, Sotto said, he and certain groups would be holding "brainstorming" sessions to prepare for, among other things, other groups that would support Poe for the presidency and his economic team.

Sotto said the LDP would try to work for the unity of the opposition as well.

Poe's supporters, including his brother Conrad, said they knew about the actor's decision to make his announcement at dawn yesterday.

Conrad said that Poe was a "very silent person," and that the family backed him "100 percent."

He also said Poe decided to run because the latter was aware that the economy was down and wanted to do something about it.

Alcuaz said he was supporting Poe even if the latter had no experience in government service. He issued the reminder that he also supported Corazon Aquino in 1985, who had no political experience as well.

"I'm willing to take the risk with FPJ," Alcuaz said.

Can't cheat him

Angping said that with Poe's popularity, it would be very hard for *dagdag-bawas* (vote-padding and shaving) operators to cheat him in the elections.

"Dagdag-bawas operators will have to work doubly hard to overcome his advantage," the lawmaker said.

The NPC, the second largest political party in the country, will hold its national convention on Dec. 5 to formalize its position for the 2004 elections.

Among those invited to attend was Negros Oriental Rep. Jacinto Paras, a member of the ruling Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats who earlier led a campaign to draft Cojuangco for the presidency.

In previous interviews, Paras said he would shift support to Poe should the latter be chosen by Cojuangco.

Yesterday, Paras said: "FPJ is the candidate to beat."

He said that from his talks with NPC congressmen, "most of them are partial toward FPJ."

"FPJ is not a controversial person; he has not been involved in any corruption charges; he has captured the people's imagination through the good-guy roles he has played in the movies," Paras said.

He also said the Lakas-NPC alliance was not expected to hold now that Poe had declared his presidential candidacy.

"The Lakas-NPC alliance in the House of Representatives is meant only for the leadership of Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.," said Paras, who leads a group of 40-50 Lakas congressmen who have vowed allegiance to Cojuangco. "It has nothing to do with the 2004 national elections."

Angping said Poe's lack of political experience should not be seen as a handicap for the actor because he had "proven to be a good student of politics."

Dialogue

According to Teodoro Casiño, secretary general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, leaders of the militant movement want to engage Poe in a discussion of issues, in the way the old man *Tata* Temyong did to help the "Panday" in the movie series that the actor made famous.

"We are inviting him to a dialogue on national issues. If he is not yet ready to face the media with his platform, leaders of the organized groups are willing to hear him out," Casiño said.

"In particular, we would like to hear his views on the peace talks, globalization, and how he plans to clean up the government. Also, we would like him to clarify the implications of his closeness with former President (Joseph) Estrada."

Plunder case

Casiño pointed out that Poe's long-running friendship with Estrada could affect the government's plunder case against the ousted President as well as the cases against Cojuangco.

"We'd want to know how much he is beholden to Erap and to Cojuangco," Casiño said.

Bayan Muna Rep. Crispin Beltran, chair of the political party Anakpawis, challenged Poe to strive for independence and not allow himself to be put in a straitjacket.

He said Poe had the chance to prove critics and detractors wrong.

"Estrada might be his friend and Cojuangco one of his backers, but Poe can choose to take a stand for the Filipino people and not allow himself to be manipulated by their self-serving interests and dictates," Beltran said.

"If and when he gets elected, it will be still up to him if he wants to trade his working-class-hero image for public enemy No. 1 of the Filipino people." *With reports from Norman Bordadora, Reuters, AP*

From mansion to small apartment, to Palace?

From page A1

week. At 15, director Mario Barri got him a starring role in the movie "Anak ni Palaris" with Rosita Noble in which he first used his father's name. He later appeared in stunt scenes and supporting roles.

'Lo Waist Gang'

His first taste of fame and stardom came with the release of Larry Santiago Productions' "Lo Waist Gang" in July 1956.

Aside from setting the trend for low-waist pants, the movie brought to people's attention Poe's acting. His next movie "Kamay ni Cain" gave him his first acting nomination as the villain to lead star Zaldy Zshornack. In 1957, he appeared in his first solo movie "Tough Guy."

Other action movies came Poe's way but the movie "Markado" in 1960 made him a major action star. The movie was produced by Hollywood-Far East Productions. Box office hit movies came one after another. It was during this decade that Poe appeared in one of his best films, "Ako ang Katarungan" by Gerry de Leon.

In 1963, he and movie idol Estrada exposed the "Big Four" syndicate. The dreaded group extorted money from film stars and threatened them with disfigurement. Both actors refused to give any money to the syndicate. He also found the courage to put up his own company FPJ Productions, and sister companies D'lanor, Jafere and Rosas Productions.

Susan Roces

In 1965, Poe made "Daigdig Ko'y Ikaw" with Susan Roces, Jesusa Sonora in real life. He later married Roces in civil ceremonies. The church wedding was held in December 1968. They are blessed with a daughter, Mary Grace.

He was known to millions as fast on the draw, deadly with his fists but less than articulate, particularly with women.

Poe assumed the characters of a soldier, a cop, a priest, a Muslim and a boxer, among other roles. Most of his portrayals showed him battling tremendous odds in protecting and defending the welfare of the oppressed.

But perhaps one of the most popular roles Poe played was that of Flavio, the blacksmith and main protagonist in the movie "Ang Panday."

The movie was such a big hit that the magical sword-wielding hero of the masses appeared in three more sequels.

Poe has won five Famas Best Actor trophies for the movies "Mga Alabok sa Lupa" (1967), "Asedillo" (1971), "Durugin si Totoy Bato" (1979), "Umpisahan Mo, Tatapusin Ko" (1983) and "Muslim Magnum .357" (1986).

These awards elevated him to the Famas Hall of Fame. Three of his movies were declared Famas Best Picture for their respective years of release, they are "Sigaw ng Digmaan" (1963), "Mga Anghel na Walang Langit" (1970), and "Ang Padrino" (1984). He was last seen in the 2003 movie "Pakners" together with billiards great Efren "Bata" Reyes.

With his fame, Poe has been tapped to endorse products like San Miguel beer. San Miguel Corp. chair Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. reportedly gave him P100 million and a P2-million Land Rover as talent fee.

Murkier world

Yesterday, Poe prepared to enter an even murkier world of political intrigue as he joined the race for the presidency.

Unlike Estrada, who rose through the ranks of public office, Poe at 64 has no such political grounding. But as Arnold Schwarzenegger proved in the governorship race in California, the screen image of a maverick avenger can have a remarkable effect at the ballot box.

Unlike Estrada, who flaunted his womanizing, gambling and drinking to the public, Poe has kept his private life secret, rarely granting interviews except to talk about his movies.

The public believes an image unmarred by the sex scandals and controversies that have dogged other stars.

But few also know where Poe stands on issues in the real world. It was widely rumored he was running for president mainly so he could pardon his old friend, Estrada, once he gets elected.

Asked if he had promised Estrada a pardon if elected, Poe said: "That case is still in court and you cannot pardon someone who is not yet convicted."

Mistakes

Poe acknowledges that people know little about his private life, especially during his youth.

He admitted that he had been wrong before. Asked by an entertainment writer about writing a book which could explain certain misconceptions about him, he replied "It will even include my mistakes which I hope the readers can learn."

One of these mistakes could be a mauling incident in his teens.

Sebastian Palanca Jr. and brother Roberto of the Palanca clan sued Poe at a Mandaluyong court for allegedly attacking them.

The brawl supposedly happened during the silver wedding anniversary celebration of actor Bob Soler's uncle and auntie.

Poe apparently approached Roberto to ask if he could dance with Roberto's partner.

Roberto told Poe that if he wanted, he could ask the girl directly. This reply irked Poe and thought it was embarrassing. Reports said he waited outside and later tried to pick a fight. When the siblings and their companions went out, Poe and his gang allegedly attacked them.

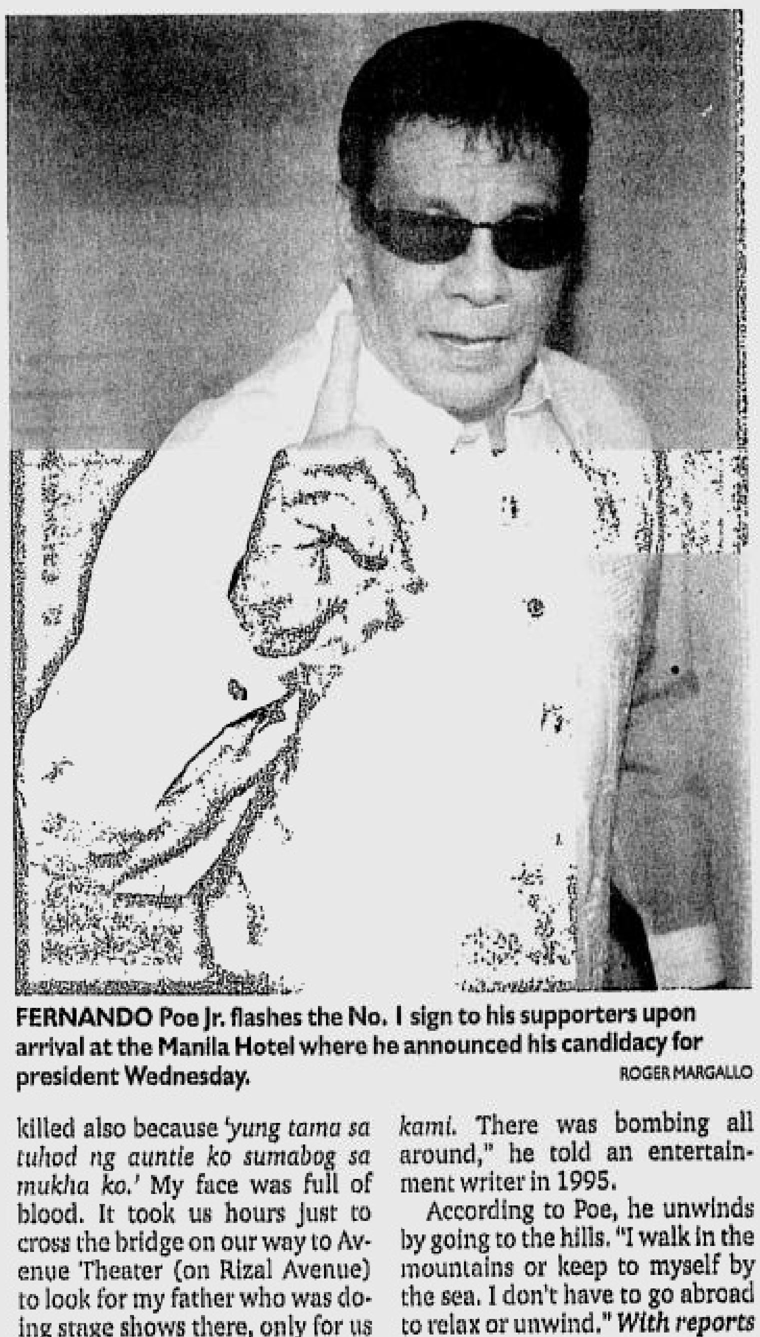
Liberation

Poe said his mother could help him in writing a book, especially about his early years.

"There are many things about my early years that I don't know, like what happened during the liberation of Manila or during World War II. I was only 2 years old then. My Mommy said, while we were trying to escape from Malate, my aunt was hit by shrapnel.

"My mother thought that I was killed also because *'yung tama sa tuhod ng auntie ko sumabog sa mukha ko.'* My face was full of blood. It took us hours just to cross the bridge on our way to Avenue Theater (on Rizal Avenue) to look for my father who was doing stage shows there, only for us to discover that he had left for Malate to look for us. *Nagkasulisi kami.* There was bombing all around," he told an entertainment writer in 1995.

According to Poe, he unwinds by going to the hills. "I walk in the mountains or keep to myself by the sea. I don't have to go abroad to relax or unwind." *With reports from Armin Adina, PDI Research, and AFP*



FERNANDO Poe Jr. flashes the No. 1 sign to his supporters upon arrival at the Manila Hotel where he announced his candidacy for president Wednesday.

ROGER MARGALLO

Police chief sacked over near shootout

By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr.

A NEAR shootout inside the Malabon City police headquarters last week has cost the city's police chief his job.

Malabon police chief Pete Ramos was relieved of his duties yesterday after he figured in a near shootout with a fellow officer, police superintendent Benjamin Cabiltes.

Investigation showed that the two officers had engaged in a heated argument earlier due to rumors that Cabiltes would replace Ramos.

The rumors circulated after Mayor Amado Vicencio was suspended. Vicencio is reportedly close to Ramos.

On Tuesday last week, Ramos had disarmed Cabiltes of his service firearm at the police headquarters. Ramos had allegedly thought Cabiltes was after him.

Last Saturday, a near shootout occurred when Cabiltes allegedly pulled out his gun and cocked it in front of Ramos during another heated argument.

The INQUIRER talked to Cabiltes yesterday, but he refused to say anything about the incident.

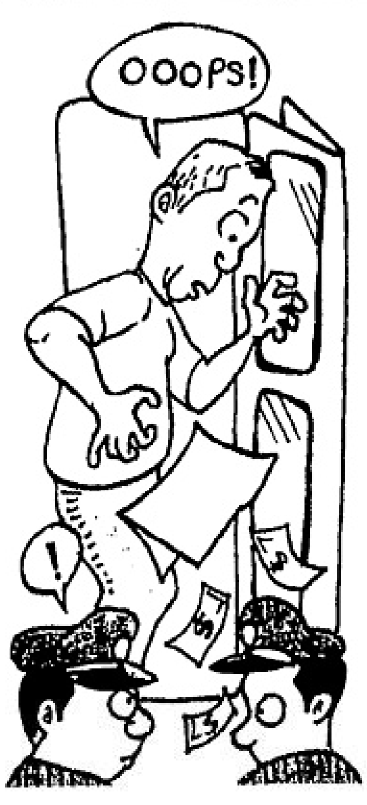
Northern Police District director Marcelino Franco told the INQUIRER he relieved Ramos to "remove the tension in (Malabon City)."

He said Ramos was already scheduled to be replaced and the "misunderstanding" only "hastened" the process.

As soon as he assumed office, acting Mayor Jayjay Yambao had allegedly expressed a wish to have Ramos replaced, Franco added.

A source told the INQUIRER that Yambao wanted Cabiltes to replace Ramos.

When Vicencio was slapped with a preventive suspension several months ago, it was Cabiltes who replaced Ramos. After Vicencio got a temporary restraining order a week after, Ramos was reinstated.



Cops help passenger, then arrest him

HAD HE been more careful, he would have remained free.

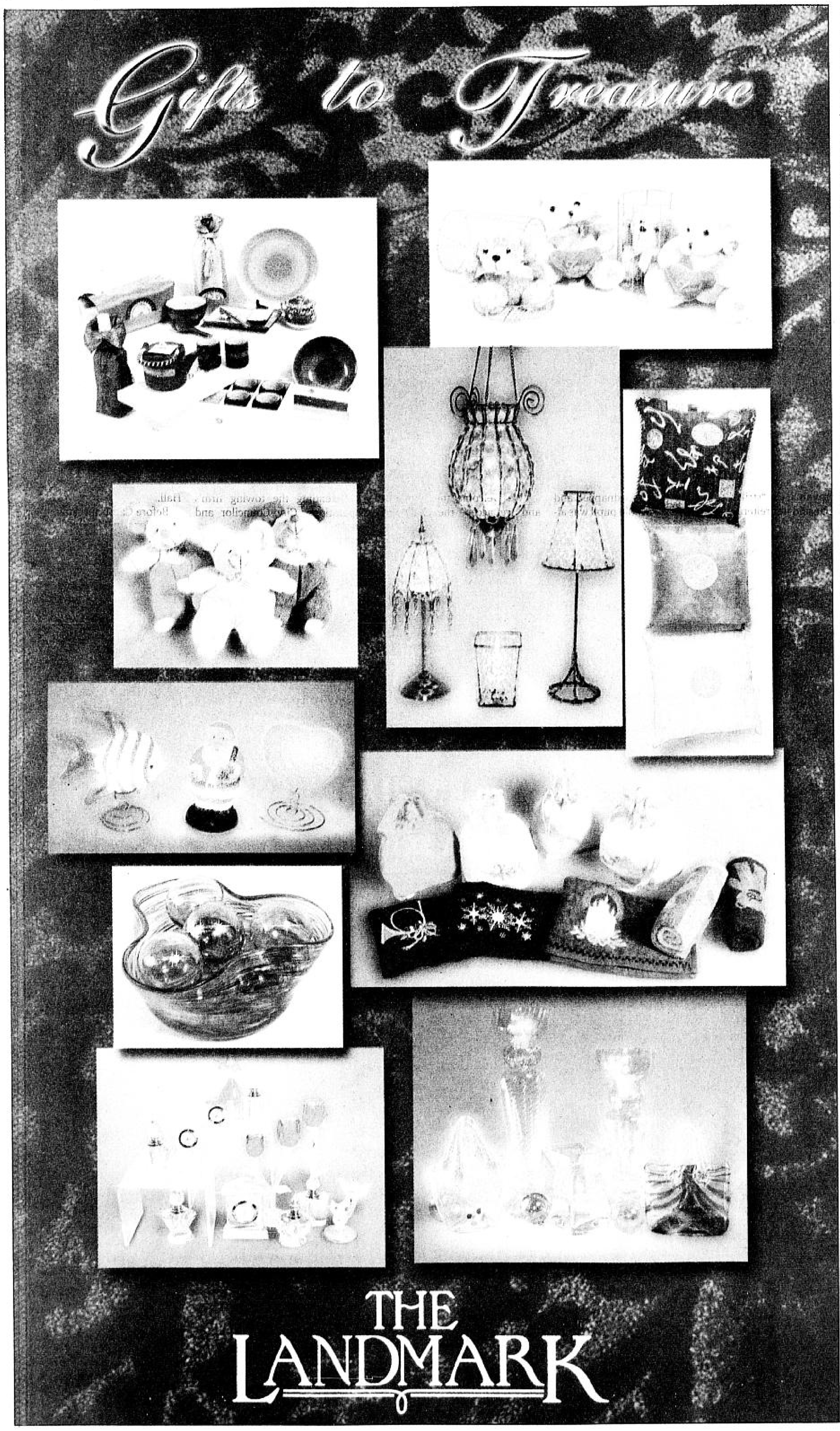
But Dominador Demata, 62, a retired Philippine Air Force man, accidentally dropped his folder when he got on a bus. And when two policemen helped him pick up his things, they noticed three paper bills, which looked fake.

The policemen invited Demata for questioning. After verifying with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the policemen confirmed that the two US $100 and the P100 bills they got from Demata were indeed fake.

Police said the two lawmen, PO1 Freddie Matute and PO1 Sherwin Daca, boarded a passenger bus about 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, as part of an action plan to conduct routine patrols on buses.

When the bus reached C3 Road, the policemen noticed Demata, who hurriedly got on the bus. But then Demata accidentally dropped his things, including the folder.

The suspect is now detained at the Caloocan City Jail. Police will file charges of possession of counterfeit money against him. *Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*



Proper send-off for slain 'angel'

By Cathy C. Yamsuan
Libre

MOURNERS will wear white when they lay 20-year-old Christian Cabangon Reyes to rest this morning at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

His father, Celestino Reyes, president of the beauty conglomerate Reyes Haircutters, believes this is the proper send-off for an angel like his son.

"He was the perfect son. He was a beautiful person, he was an angel," a dazed and unshaven Reyes would tell visitors repeatedly during Christian's wake at the Arlington Memorial Chapel.

"God gave me an angel for 20 years and I didn't even know it. Parents shouldn't really take anything for granted and continually show their love for their children," he added.

Christian was a third year computer applications student of the College of St. Benilde.

On the night of Nov. 20, Christian was waiting for a green light along Quirino Ave., near the corner of Osmeña Highway in Manila when a snatcher tried to grab his cellular phone from the open window of his car.

Reyes said he was told that the snatcher tried to punch his son but Christian ducked.

The snatcher then pulled out a gun and shot Christian. The bullet entered just below his left armpit and pierced his heart and lungs.

"The snatcher didn't bother to get Christian's cellphone after that," Reyes said.

The corner of Quirino Avenue and Osmena Highway is notorious for cellphone snatching incidents committed there.

Insp. Carlos Enconado, chief of the San Andres Police Community Precinct, said snatchers strike twice during the day—one during the rush hour in the morning and the other between 8 and 9 p.m. when the truck ban is lifted.

Reyes said the alleged lookout who aided his son's murderer has been arrested.

At one point, Reyes said he felt so despondent over what happened that he thought of killing himself.

"I was waiting for a sign from Christian that he wanted me to come with him. It's so easy, I could shoot myself. But he didn't send one," Reyes murmured, his voice hardly audible.

"It only made me resolve to take better care of those he left—my wife, his two younger sisters," he added.

"Right now I am thinking of making an appeal to all parents. Know the value of your children. You'll never know when God will take them back. We go through life thinking our children will bury us," Reyes said.

METROBRIEFS

Naia security beefed up

THE NINOY Aquino International Airport (Naia) has beefed up security for the expected increase of passenger volume during the coming Christmas season. Naia Assistant General Manager for Security and Emergency Services Angel Atutubo said they have added patrols inside the airport and areas around the complex. ***Alcuin Papa***

A different book fair

THIRTY non-government organizations and academic research centers are again organizing a book fair of civil society publications on Dec. 1-5 at the Palma Hall lobby, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City. The activity, called Second Philippine Alternative Book Fair, aims to establish a network of NGOs and civil society groups that will facilitate regular exchanges of their publications and institute an annual venue for the promotion and distribution of publications on a wide range of social, political and economic issues.

Still Green at 25!

THE DE La Salle Santiago Zobel is celebrating its 25th year with a grand alumni homecoming on Saturday, Nov. 29, at the DLSZ Gym 1, Ayala Alabang Village. With honorary batches '88 and '93 who are celebrating their 15th and 10th anniversaries, DLSZ will turn 25 with a bang! Hosting an amazing showcase of talent, performing artists from various alumni batches, DLSZ promises an unforgettable evening of fun and reminiscing. For more info, please call the DLSZ Alumni Association Office at 8503054 or 8502985.

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E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
METRO
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

Water, phone lines delayed road projects, says MMDA

By Margaux Ortiz

METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chair Bayani Fernando defended Tuesday night the contractor working on the much criticized Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo) road project in Makati City.

Fernando said the contractor, R-2 Builders, did not expect this part of the city to be "heavily wired" with water and telephone lines which now need to be relocated.

"This is why I believe that the contractor has no fault (with the delay)," he added.

Subsequently, the MMDA chair did not express confidence that the project would be completed as planned in March 2004.

Meanwhile, stories of dismay and frustration related to the roadwork continued to increase.

Boyet Marcelo, a car dealer, said the road project nearly killed him Monday night.

He related that he was parking his Mercedes Benz along the avenue when electrical cables used in the project suddenly burst into flames and burned his tires.

"What if we weren't able to control the flames and the car exploded?" he asked.

A pawnshop employee at a Cebuana Lhuiller branch said that many of their regular customers had stopped coming to them.

"Many of our clients have cars and they have a hard time parking because of the project," the employee lamented in Filipino.

Meantime, a jeepney driver said road closures were forcing them to take long detours which had resulted in less earnings.

"We used to earn at least P500 a day. Now it's down to P250," the driver said. *With reports from Tomnie Susa and Beverly Torralba*

Execs mull firecracker zones

By Tina Santos

IF YOU can't lick them, relocate them.

Government and police officials in Quezon City and the northern part of Metro Manila are studying the option of designating firecracker zones in their localities to better control the use of pyrotechnic materials in the New Year.

Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte said that although there had never been any firecracker zones in the city, he "might consider them this year."

"It's a good idea. Maybe I will bring it up (with other city officials)," Belmonte said in a phone interview.

Northern Police District director Chief Supt. Marcelino Franco Jr., for his part, believes the setting up of pyrotechnic zones would reduce the number of firecracker-related injuries and deaths during the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

But he said he had yet to discuss the idea of setting up such safe zones with Mayors Rey Malonzo (Caloocan City), Mark Allan Jay Yambao (Malabon City), Toby Tiangco (Navotas) and Emmanuel Carlos (Valenzuela City).

However, Franco noted that it would be hard to identify potential pyrotechnic zones.

"We will need big spaces for that (firecracker zones) but I think it would be a lot safer for the residents," he said.

The district director added that it would be better if local legislators would initiate respective ordinances creating the safe zones.

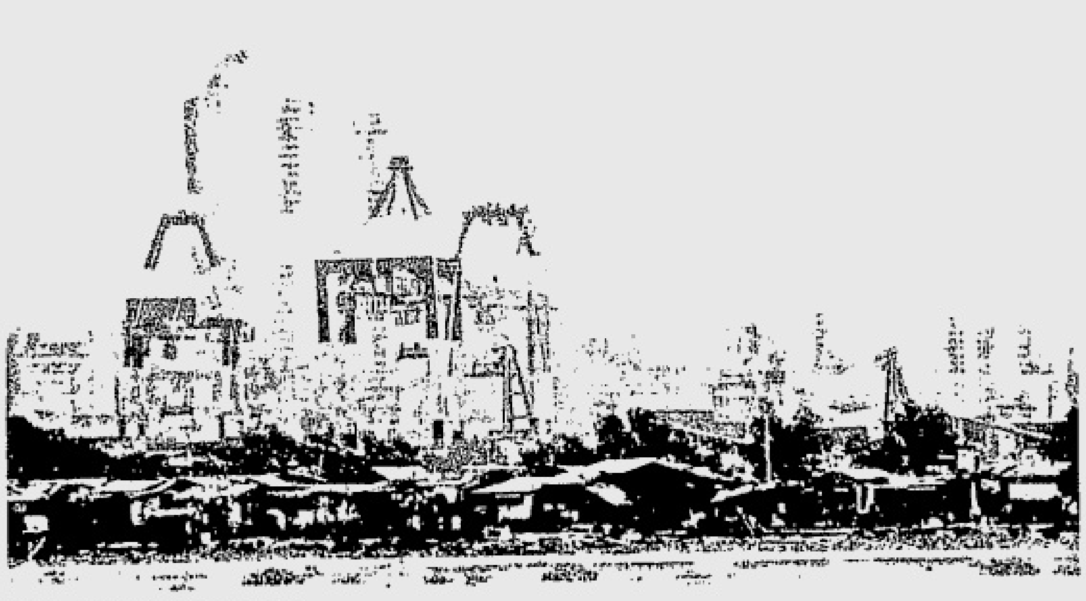
"An ordinance will make firecracker zones mandatory during the celebration of the Holidays," Franco said.

In a phone interview, Carlos agreed with the plan but said they might just designate plazas, patios and other open spaces as firecracker zones.

Some residents, however, did not believe that the idea could be enforced since many Filipino revelers purportedly wanted to light up firecrackers in front of their houses.

On Tuesday, Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said that they would no longer push for a total ban on pyrotechnic materials as he noted that there were fewer people reported hurt by firecracker explosions.

Instead, Dayrit ordered all hospitals to coordinate with the police in creating a database to help identify possible suspects who indiscriminately fire their guns during the New Year merrymaking.



PICTURE IMPERFECT
High-tech cranes and high-rise buildings form a backdrop to a row of shanties that line the shore of the Manila Bay in Manila. ERIC ARAZAS

'Strike 3' policy old, but welcome

By Luige del Puerto

POLICE chiefs under the Eastern Police District said there was nothing new about President Macapagal-Arroyo's "strike three" policy but said her reiteration of the directive posed as a challenge for lawmen to curb the rash of kidnappings and bank robberies in Metro Manila.

Ms Macapagal issued an ultimatum to police station commanders and district directors on Tuesday after Coca Cola executive Betty Sy was kidnapped and killed. A 10-year-old pupil was also later abducted.

Under the policy, district directors and station commanders would be sacked if three incidents of heinous crimes, like bank robberies or kidnappings, occur in their territories in close succession.

"We welcome the ultimatum and we accept the challenge," said Sr. Supt. Ericson Velasquez, Mandaluyong City police director.

Manila officials split over towing services

By Tarra Quismundo

IS A TOWING company illegally operating in Manila? It will depend on who you ask.

Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna said that private company Cathy and Kyle "has no right to tow cars" in the city.

Lacuna, in an interview, said that the towing company does not have a contract that he knows of.

"I do not remember ever approving a contract into which the city entered with Cathy and Kyle," a visibly irritated Lacuna said, adding that "every contract must be approved by the City Council."

Lacuna and some members of the Manila City Council gave the statement following complaints against the company's alleged illegal towing operations.

Mayor Joselito Atienza Jr., however, said that a contract was not necessary because Cathy and Kyle's operations would not be long term.

Defending the towing firm's operations, City Councilor and majority floor leader Marlon Lacson said that City Hall's deal with Cathy and Kyle did not have to pass through the City Council.

He explained that since the firm's exclusive towing rights were only for one year, it was enough for Atienza to negotiate a deal with it as "an act of administration."

"Only long term contracts, like private company's lease of city-owned lots for say 15 years, need to pass through the council," Lacson said.

He explained further that the "executive decision" to empower Cathy and Kyle to tow cars in the city was only up until the city could set up its own towing service by next year.

According to Lacson, Atienza gets irritated by complaints against the towing company.

The councilor said towing operations could not just be stopped because illegal parking might become prevalent in the city.

Retrieving a car towed away by Cathy and Kyle costs P1,700. Of this amount, P200 goes to City Hall.

Before Cathy and Kyle, towing operations in Manila were handled by Hagar Towing Services, another private company.

Shooting baffles probers

POLICE probers looking into the shooting of a National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agent in Marikina City still could not piece together the events that happened Monday night.

The officers said they found witnesses to be uncooperative, while they doubted the testimony of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority enforcer who talked to the NBI rookie shortly before four men who reportedly claimed to be Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency agents shot him.

The enforcer had confirmed what the police already knew—that Special Investigator Marvin Matamis, 30, alighted from an FX taxi to ask him to apprehend the FX driver, whom the NBI agent accused of bad-mouthing him, said Sr. Supt. Felipe Rojas.

The witness said he did not see the actual shooting.

This developed as NBI reported that Matamis was already out of danger. *Luige del Puerto and Leila Salaverria*

Japan might break ties with us

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

ACTOR Fernando Poe Jr. has finally declared his intention to run for President.

God bless the Philippines!

* * *

If FPJ is nominated by the opposition—and chances are he will be—Raul Roco or Panfilo Lacson will be sidelined.

FPJ will give Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, a very close fight.

FPJ may even win the election, given the immaturity of Filipino voters.

Kawawa naman ang Pilipinas !

* * *

The value of the peso vis-à-vis the US dollar has gone down the past few days because of fears that FPJ would declare his candidacy. How much lower the peso will go now that the actor has come out in the open, is probably causing big jitters at the stock market.

And if FPJ won the election, business tycoon Lucio Tan's prediction might come true: $1 equals P100!

Yan ang tunay na Kenkoy money! Just like the value of the peso during the Japanese Occupation.

* * *

And the talk is that the Japanese government might break diplomatic ties with the Philippines if Fernando Poe Jr. becomes our President.

Kasi marami siyang pinatay na mga Hapon sa kanyang mga pelikula.

* * *

Raymund Narag, 29, a former inmate at the Quezon City jail, is one example of a guy who has turned his bad luck into a meaningful pursuit.

Narag was jailed for five years but was acquitted of the death of schoolmate Dennis Venturina during a frat rumble on the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman, Quezon City, a couple of years back.

He has turned his bad karma into dharma.

* * *

Karma is a Sanskrit term for the universal law of retribution or reward for past deeds or misdeeds. Nobody escapes from karma, good or bad. People who are recipients of good fortune are actually reaping the reward for good deeds in the past.

Dharma, on the other hand, is another Sanskrit term for "mission in life." Everybody was born into this world to fulfill a mission. Each person's mission is different from another's.

So, when a person dies—whatever the manner of his death is—he has completed his dharma or mission on earth.

* * *

When you suffer from bad luck, tell yourself, "I'm just paying a karmic debt, but I will make use of this ill luck as an opportunity to help others and myself." That's dharma, which earns good karma in this life or the next.

Instead of sulking, Narag became a leader among his fellow inmates at the Quezon City jail. As a free man, he is now trying to help improve the country's penal system.

By doing what he's doing now, Narag is earning good karma for future use. Narag has turned bad karma—his going to prison—into good karma in trying to improve the lot of his former fellow inmates.

* * *

The title of the column Tuesday was supposed to have been taken from the above item.

That's why Tuesday's title, "Turning bad karma into good," was inappropriate. The above item, which was the last in that column, was cut for lack of space.

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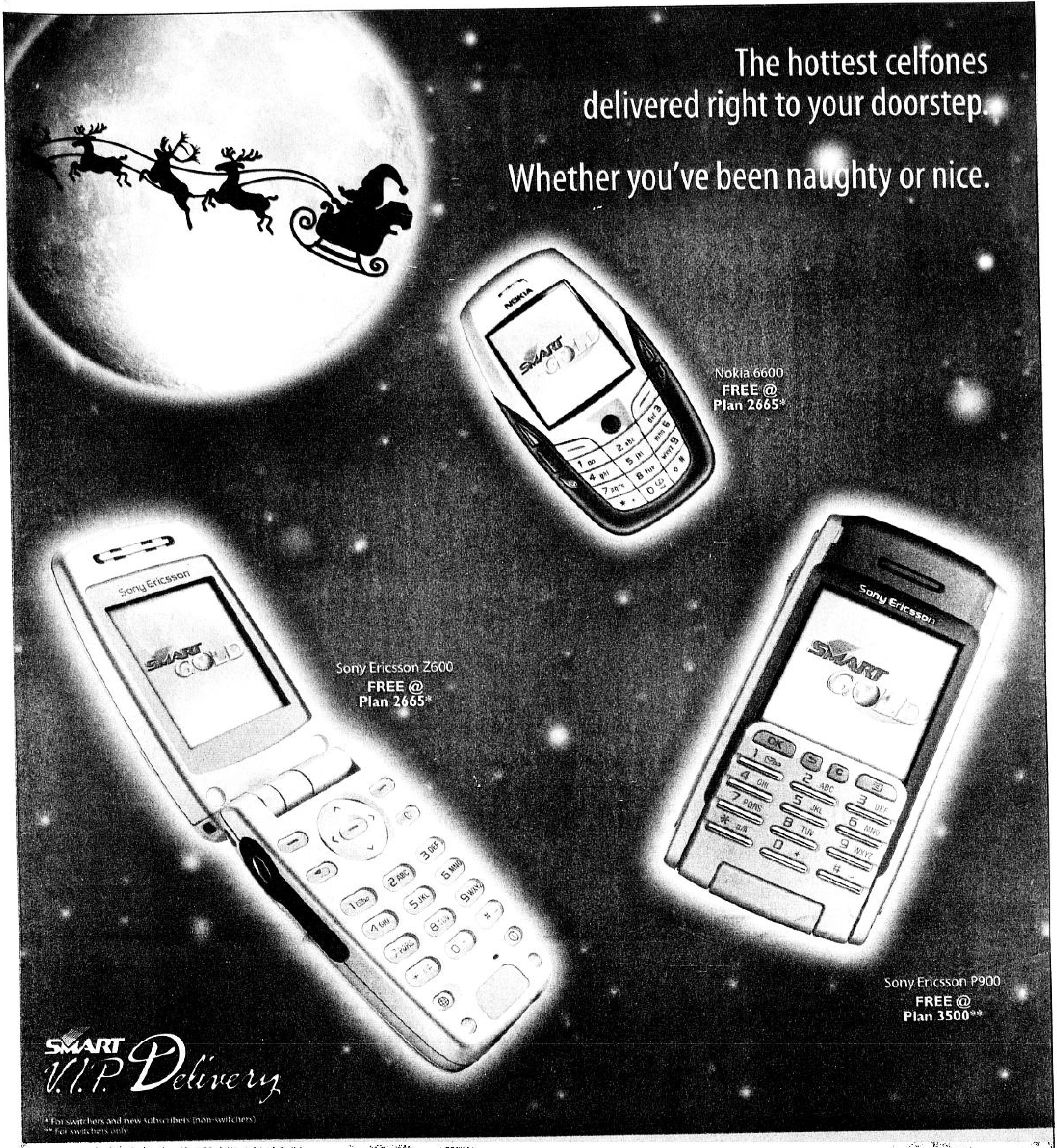
DETAILS

Date : 28 November 2003 (Friday)
Time : 9:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Venue : Boardroom 7 & 8, 4/F New World Renaissance Hotel Esperanza St. corner Makati Avenue, Makati City

For inquiries, please call Ms. Tin-Tin Calla at 7168306 up to 07 or Mr. Ed Calma at 0916-4715170



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SPORTS

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**
Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Rockets vs Jazz; 10 a.m. (r-10 p.m.); Solar Sports; Pistons vs Sixers; 7 p.m.; IBC 13 - Houston hopes to launch Utah out of orbit while Coach Larry Brown faces his old squad as Detroit faces Philadelphia.

Vintage NBA - Earl Monroe; 9 a.m. (r-5 p.m.); Bill Laimbeer; 1 p.m.; Solar Sports - Take a look back at the careers of the "Pearl" who popularized the spin move and the Bad Boy who won back-to-back titles in Detroit.

PBA PLAYOFFS

SMB, Coke near finals

By June Navarro

NO ONE knew Sta. Lucia Realty better than Kwan Johnson.

Johnson mocked the defense thrown at him by his former team to lead the San Miguel Beermen to a convincing 101-86 win over the Realtors last night in their Samsung-PBA Reinforced Conference semifinal playoffs at the Philsports Arena.

Johnson, the Realtors' import for two conferences in 1999, inflicted most of the offensive damage to Sta. Lucia as the Beermen took a commanding 2-0 lead in their best-of-five series.

The Beermen go for a sweep and a finals' appearance since the 2001 Governors Cup finals in Game 3 of the series tomorrow.

Coca -Cola rallied from 21 points down to frustrate Talk 'N Text, 109-105, in the second game and also moved within a win of gaining the finals with a similar 2-0 lead.

Johnson scored 12 of his game-high 27 points in the third-quarter explosion that boosted the Beermen ahead, 81-63, entering the last 10 minutes.

Johnson's energy also rubbed off on his teammates as Olsen Racela, Dondon Hontiveros, Dorian Peña and Danny Ildefonso helped in humbling the Realtors.

"Kwan has given the team tremendous amount of energy. It's something we direly need here in the playoffs," said SMB coach Jong Uichico.

As the Beermen moved to the threshold of a year-end championship stint, history will be on their side in Game 3.

In 34 previous best-of-five semifinal pairings, 17 squads that took a 2-0 edge went on to advance to the Finals.

Of those 17 semifinalists, 10 went on to score a sweep, four clinched the series in Game 4 while three were forced to a decider but still won.

Scores:

SMB 101—Johnson 27, Ildefonso 16, Hontiveros 15, Mente 12, Peña 12, Belasco 8, Victoria 5, Racela 4, Gahol 2, Legaspi 0, Gamboa 0.

STA. LUCIA 86—Espino 18, Duremdes 14, Aquino 12, Tutt 11, Mendoza 10, Adriano 9, Santos 6, Bat-og 2, Victolero 2, Ong 2, Webb 0, Tan 0.

Quarters: 24-22, 43-38, 81-63, 101-86.

Angolans test RP cagers' mettle

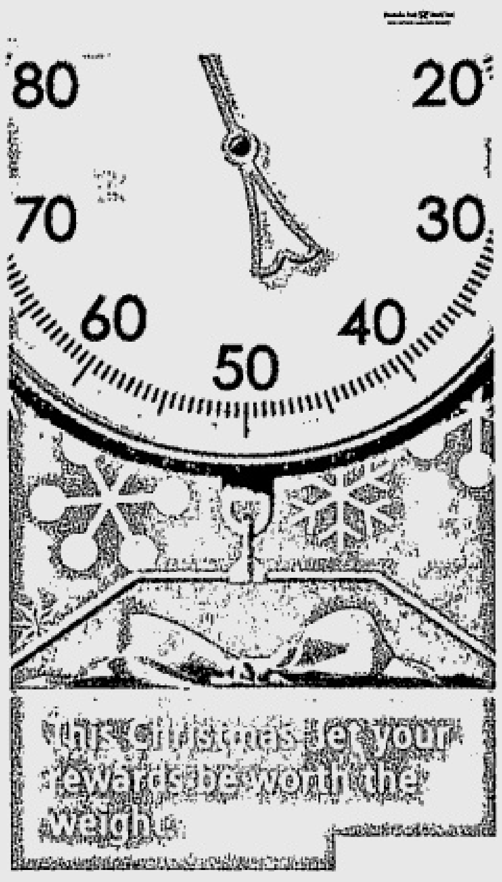
IT'S not the Angolans learning from us but our team learning from them.

Unchallenged in their buildup for the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games next month, the national cagers will finally be tested when they face the visiting seven-time African champions at 12 noon on Saturday at the Pasig Sports Center.

The Angolans, who are also scheduled to play against PBL clubs, arrived without fanfare Tuesday to formally start their buildup for a fourth stint in the Olympics.

PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad said the Philippine team could learn a lot from Angola, which nipped Nigeria,73-70, last October to clinch the African title.

With an average height of 6-5, the visitors are expected to be more than a match for the Nationals, who won all their exhibition matches against PBL clubs recently.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Bata's son ousted

By Dennis U. Eroa

F. REYES

THE SON of billiards hero Efren "Bata" Reyes failed in his initial attempt to gain recognition, bowing to Malaysian ace Chong Yen Foong at the start of the Cafe Puro 1st Philippine Open yesterday at the Octagon Hall of the Robinson's Galleria in Mandaluyong City.

The 20-year-old Frennie Reyes, eldest and only son of Bata, actually led 6-2 against Chong but lost his composure with two straight scratches in the 9th and 10th racks.

"I'm quite nervous but it's part of the game," said the 5-foot-7 Frennie, a junior computer science student at the Holy Angel University in Angeles City.

The elder Reyes wasn't around when Frennie battled Chong, who was an instant crowd-drawer with his F4 looks.

Frennie later bowed to Mario Tolentino, 9-3, and kissed his bid goodbye for a slot in the round of 32 today.

The four-day billiards extravaganza sponsored by Cafe Puro is a tie-up between ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp and Puyat Sports headed by Aristeo "Putch" Puyat. It offers a total cash prize of $64,000.

Nazario to explain training expenses

By Rey Danseco
Contributor

ROD Nazario will have some explaining to do to justify the $350,000 that Manny Pacquiao spent in training for his fight against Marco Antonio Barrera.

Pacquiao's manager Marty Elorde, disclaiming knowledge that HBO had allocated a $700,000 purse for his ward, said Nazario was scheduled to meet him today to explain how the $350,000 was spent.

"We all knew before the fight that we are only entitled to $350,000, but how come it seems the purse is $700,000?" Elorde said.

But he made it clear he is not accusing Nazario of any irregularity.

"I don't think Mang Rod (Nazario) can take that huge amount. But I doubt whether Manny's training expenses reached $350,000," said Elorde.

Nazario had confirmed an INQUIRER report Monday that Pacquiao's purse was actually $700,000 according to two HBO commentators during the fight.

PACQUIAO

But Pacquiao's business manager said half of it was spent for Manny's buildup in the United States, including air fare and board and lodging for the members of his team.

Nazario also denied a report that most of the missing money probably wound up in the pocket of M & M Sports owner Murad Muhammad, Pacquiao's New Jersey-based American promoter.

The youngest sibling of the late Flash Elorde said Nazario charges Pacquiao's training expenses to his 25-percent share of Manny's purse as manager, thus shrinking his take to only 20 percent.

Nazario is entitled to a 10-percent share along with American trainer Freddie Roach.

Filipino trainers Buboy Fernandez and Lito Mondejar share another 5 percent from the purse and the rest goes to Pacquiao after the 30-percent tax.

Torion asking PBA to lower suspension

By June Navarro

SAYING it would drastically affect his livelihood, a repentant Jimwell Torion of Red Bull yesterday appealed to PBA Commissioner Noli Eala to lower his eight-month suspension for an intentional foul that broke the nose of Talk 'N Text's Jimmy Alapag.

"*Kapag natuloy ang* suspension *ko, papano na ang pangkabuhayan ko* (What will happen to me and my family if I'm suspended that long)?" said Torion, the sole breadwinner in a family of five, the youngest being 3 days old.

Torion was slapped an eight-month ban beginning February next season that will deprive him of at least P2 million in salaries on top of a hefty fine amounting to P70,000 believed to be the harshest in league history.

"*Maraming umaasa sa akin at wala na akong pinagkukuhaan ng pang-gastos namin sa araw-araw bukod sa* basketball (Many people depend on me and my only means of livelihood is playing basketball)," said the Cebuano playmaker.

Anticipating hard times ahead, Torion has returned his brand-new Honda CRV and recovered P200,000 of his P250,000 downpayment.

The Argao, Cebu-native is also funding the studies of youngest sister Vivian, a second-year nursing student at the Trinity College.

Torion now commutes daily from Antipolo where he pays an P84,000 monthly mortgage for a house in Vermont Royale subdivision.

Torion said he was shocked by the suspension, adding it would be hard to recover from it. "*Hindi ko naman sinasadya iyong nangyari. Pasensya na* (I didn't mean to do it. I'm sorry) Jimmy," said Torion.

Danny Espiritu, Torion's manager, said his ward wants to personally apologize to Alapag.

At the same time, Espiritu said Torion should have been meted at most a 3-4-game suspension based on a Games and Amusements Board ruling on a similar offense.

NBA results: Indiana 98, Minnesota 75; Miami 91, New Orleans 87; Milwaukee 95, Philadelphia 91; Dallas 124, Chicago 98; Denver 110, Phoenix 80; Washington 81, Portland 80; Sacramento 109, Memphis 89; New Jersey 93, Seattle 70.

TORION: I'm sorry. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

AF3 series ends Sunday

THE ASIAN Formula 3 series, dubbed as "2003 Addict Mobile Formula 3 Super Prix," stages its championship round this weekend (Nov. 29-30) at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Three ace drivers—Pepon Marave of Shell-Casino Filipino-Team Tom's, Richard Joson of Denso JF3 Racing and Mark Goddard of Castrol-Ambipur Car-Team Goddard—are expected to slug it out for the International crown of this series sponsored by Addict Mobile, Yokohama, Denso, RCL, Hewlett Packard, Fila and Samsung.

The AF3 races will be aired live—a first on Philippine racing history—over the National Broadcasting Network from 11-12 noon and from 3-4 p.m.

SPORTSWATCH

2 RP teams off to Hanoi today

THE ROWING and water polo teams, the first batch of Filipino athletes bound for the 22nd Vietnam Southeast Asian Games, will leave for Hanoi today, led by Sydney Olympian Benjamin Tolentino Jr., silver medalist in the men's single sculls of the 2001 Kuala Lumpur SEA Games. The rowers depart with a promise to end a four-year gold drought in the biennial meet. Returning with Tolentino, who narrowly missed the bronze in the same event in last year's Busan Asiad, are the men's coxless team of four (Edgardo Maerina, Mark Anthony Galvez, Alvin Amposta and Jose Rodriguez), which also won the silver in Malaysia. ***Roy Luarca***

Samsung ties up with POC

SAMSUNG Philippines, the biggest corporate benefactor of Philippine sports lately, has thrown its support to the Philippine Olympic Committee in time for the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games which opens next week. The Korean electronics giant has previously tied up with the Philippine Sports Commission in recent international competitions like the Busan Asian Games last year. It wasn't immediately explained if the firm has withdrawn its support from the PSC and channeled its funds to the POC instead or it will back up both sports bodies at the same time. Just the same, POC president Celso Dayrit said he is grateful to Samsung's chief operating officer Sam Youl Eom. ***Marc Anthony Reyes***

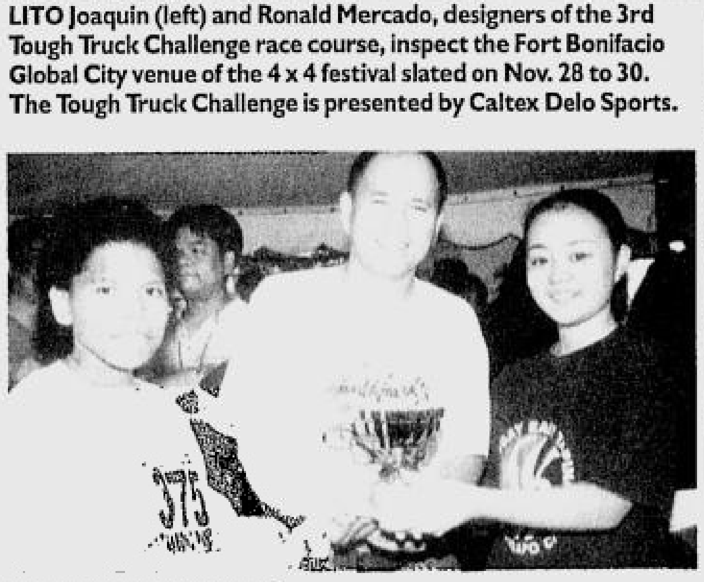
Mendoza heads nat'l duathlon cast

RYAN "Bad Boy" Mendoza will be the man to watch when the 2003 National Duathlon Championships gets under way at the Clearwater Country Club in Clark Special Economic Zone this Sunday (Nov. 30). Leading the challengers to Mendoza are Davao City's George Vilog, the country's top triathlete, who is equally at ease in the 10-kilometer run, 40-km bike and 5-km event, and Fil-Am Arland Macasieb, who is raring to redeem himself from his forgettable showing in the Asian Triathlon Championship last month. The event is sponsored by Philippine Sports Commission, Enervon, Clark Development Corp., Speedo, Clearwater Country Club, Promax and POC Sport for All Commission. Other backers are Blue Bianco Hotel, Mimosa Montevista, El Supremo Catering Services and Glaxo SmithKline (GSK). For more details, call Fabie (0916-2653109) or Melvin (0920-8182906).

Truck Challenge unfolds tomorrow

THE COUNTRY's best off-roaders strut their wares aboard their tough trucks when Caltex Delo Sports presents the 3rd Tough Truck Challenge on Nov. 28-30 at the Fort Bonifacio Global City. Staged by the Manila Offroaders Inc. (Mori), this year's Tough Truck Challenge promises to be an even higher event both for veteran off-roaders and mere spectators alike. "We have a tradition to keep and we're committed to keeping our place in the history of 4 x 4 racing as one of its most prestigious events," said Mori president Brian Diaz. Rep. Rimpy Bondoc is the race director. Also on tap is the "Stocks on the Rocks," a special side show to the public on Nov. 29 and 30. Deadline for registration is at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday with the race promptly starting at 9 a.m. Awards rites are set on Sunday, 5 p.m.

LITO Joaquin (left) and Ronald Mercado, designers of the 3rd Tough Truck Challenge race course, inspect the Fort Bonifacio Global City venue of the 4 x 4 festival slated on Nov. 28 to 30. The Tough Truck Challenge is presented by Caltex Delo Sports.


PATAKBO WINNER
Women's division winner Mayeth Anatacio (left) receives a trophy and cash prize of P3,000 from Olongapo City councilor Rolen Paulino and SK Federation head Robin Rose Buenafe after the Beam-Zest-O Patakbong Pinoy leg held recently in Olongapo City. The next leg will be in Valenzuela City on Sunday.

Fil Am battle cry

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THE BIGGEST amateur golf tournament in the world, participants-wise, does not unfurl until Dec. 1 but already, the event is getting the most meticulous attention it richly deserves from the organizers. I refer to the Fil Am Golf Championship, now on its 54th year at both the Baguio Country Club (BCC) and Camp John Hay (CJH) at the Pines City.

It couldn't get any better, and definitely bigger, than this: Nearly 800 players from 73 teams from around the world have so far been approved to vie for honors in the six-day tournament that ends on Dec. 6. It's a record, surpassing the 69 teams entered last year. Bob Sobrepeña's Manila Southwoods is aiming for a third straight Fil title and the Mizuno-DHL squad of Rod Feliciano and Lovell Gopez a third Am crown.

This year, nine applicants have been turned down, a difficult decision to make as that meant thousands of pesos going down the drain for the organizers. Several other teams are pleading their cases; this time, organizers are so determined in turning down appeals that even an intervening President Macapagal would get a rejection slip.

It's that tough.

But it had to be done or else, the tournament will suffer from glitches beyond the control of human intelligence. BCC's general manager Anthony de Leon and BCC's GM Heiner Maulbecker, co-chairmen of the organizing committee, have been that busy putting things in order—with Nanette Filler and Primo Freddie Mendoza wracking their brains, too, to ensure a trouble-free competition.

I can only commiserate with them.

An overflow of participating teams will spill players into the night, making a mockery of the tournament whose prestige is the envy of many. Just a day that will see a round not getting completed will have a chain effect on the overall makeup of the tournament. Even a minor delay could derail the entire proceedings. Not even the installation of floodlights on both courses—which organizers did—to accommodate late-finishing flights will be enough to maintain order during the entirety of the tournament. Not reining in participants will produce more headaches than gains.

Indeed, organizers have not left anything to chance.

To begin with, they have gotten officials of world-class caliber to officiate the tournament, led no less by Mr. Golf himself, Taby Tabaniag.

Taby hit the road on board a Revo VX200 before the break of dawn yesterday with his crack team in tow to finalize everything—from the establishment of tournament rules to the delineation of markings at both BCC and CJH and eliminating potential bottlenecks during the week-long event. Before that, Taby's crew had gone up to Baguio three times to lay down the groundwork of operations, specifically in the area of officiating the tournament.

"It is not easy handling the job, but it's a job we need to do in the name of the game we all love," said Taby, who turned 84 on Nov. 1. "Officiating a golf tournament has always been a pleasure. For one, it affords me the chance to watch people enjoy the game. For another, it keeps me young."

Because of the hugeness of the field, the battle cry of Taby's team, which include Jake P. Ayson, Toots Aquino and Butch Brodett, among others, is, "Speed up play."

That means, each player is being encouraged to strictly observe the rule on undue delay so that the 54th Fil Am Golf Championship will score its usual huge success. One major source of undue delay is the bad habit of holing out on a hole that has already a zero score on it.

As in all competitions, each participant holds the key to the success of a tournament.

***

FASTBREAK. My congratulations to Arsenio "Lance" Lacson III for a fine performance in the recent Don Bosco Makati swimming event. The 12-year-old Lance has shown a great promise when he yielded the gold to a 14-year-old rival but not after putting up a good fight. Keep on punching, Lance!

Sisters of Mary, Albert rule Little Olympics

SISTERS of Mary Girlstown-Manila prevailed in the track and field events but leaned on its football team's victory to keep the overall high school trophy at the close of the 2003 Milo Little Olympics for the National Capital Region.

Sharing the limelight was Dr. A. Albert Elementary School which successfully defended the grade school title.

SOM Girlstown-Manila snared 14 golds, 12 silvers and 5 bronzes to beat SOM Boystown-Cavite which compiled a 14-11-7 medal tally and take home the top prize of P40,000 worth of sports equipment. The latter won P20,000.

Rizal High School topped taekwondo and strung up a 10-1-14 output to finish third.

The sportsfest was organized by CTW Group and supported by Cebu Pacific, GCAA executive committee, POC, PSC and DepEd.

Rounding up the Top 10 high schools are MH Del Pilar (8-5-10), La Imaculada Concepcion (6-1-2), PCU (5-4-6), St. Paul-Pasig (4-4-0), Marist (4-2-6), Letran (4-1-0) and San Beda (3-4-1).

In the elementary division, Albert Elem. School compiled a 7-4-8 medal tally followed by Aurora A. Quezon ES (6-8-7), St. Paul-Pasig (5-6-1), De La Paz ES (5-5-7), San Diego ES (5-3-3), St. Scholastica (5-2-4), Imus Pilot-Cavite (4-1-2), Marist (3-1-6), Liceo de San Pablo (3-1-2) and Fairview ES (1-0-1).

Masco chair Ali Atienza will grace the awarding ceremonies at 2:30 p.m. today at the Century Park Hotel together with Nestle officials led by Milo sports executive Pat Goc Ong.

RACING

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1--1. Toril 2. Once and for All 3. Archer 4. Astig 5. Classic foster Choice

Race 2--1. Caballero 2. Saint Michael 3. Bambino 4. Yours Truly

Race 3--1. Assunta de Rio 2. Witch Craft 3. Bhabe's Treasure 4. Beatitudes

Race 4--1. You and Me 2. Jamie's Princess 3. Baby My Beloved

Race 5--1. Hand In Hand 2. Top Most 3. Queen of Gala 4. Man of the Hour 5. Thunder Fire

Race 6--1. D' Optician 2. Astimegoesby 3. High Typhoon 4. Rose and Toy 5. Kitana 6. Free Rein

Race 7--1. Modulo Queen 2. Kathy Rose 3. Dedicated 4. Armee's Hope 5. Taskmania

Race 8--1. Striker 2. Elusive Quality 3. Major Leaguer 4. Namaste

Race 9--1. St. Emilion 2. Ang Seaman 3. Diligence 4. Kissin Tzang 5. Ocean Menary 6. Dalidali

ASIAN TILT

Ace pitcher opens for Blu Boys vs Iranians

SAYING it wants to begin its campaign with a flourish, the Philippine coaching staff has decided to field no less than its No. 1 pitcher when the Blu Boys play the Iranians this Saturday at the start of the seventh Asian softball championship at the Rizal Stadium.

GAMES SATURDAY *(Rizal Stadium)*
9 a.m.—India vs Chinese-Taipei
11 a.m.—Indonesia vs Hong Kong
1 p.m.—Opening ceremonies
2 p.m.—Iran vs Philippines
4 p.m.—Thailand vs Japan

Veteran Roger Rojas, the team's top hurler in its five-man rotation, is expected to come out a winner against the Iranians, whom the Blu Boys meet at 2 p.m. in one of four games taking the wraps off the five-day, eight-nation Asian qualifying for the 2004 world championship.

"He can easily handle the Iranians. *Siya ang pupukol kasi gusto naming maganda ang* start *natin*," said head coach Reynaldo Manzanares yesterday. "He's good. Possibly, one of the best in Asia."

A veteran of the last world championship in South Africa, the 35-year-old Rojas is also the strongest choice to pitch for the Blu Boys if they make the championship game, possibly against defending champion Japan on Dec. 3.

Looking good and feeling great after another long workout yesterday, Rojas, a native of Zamboanga City, said he wants to pitch against the Japanese to avenge a loss the last time the Blu Boys and the former met in 1998.

In the 1998 Asian finals, played before a big crowd at the Rizal stadium, Rojas was pitching magnificently against the Japanese until he yielded a two-run homer with two outs in the fifth inning. The Blu Boys lost, 1-2.

"*Gusto kong makabawi sa kanila. Sana palarin tayo*," said Rojas, a 5-foot-10, 190-lb hurler who split his two games in the 2000 world tournament.

With a spot in the world championship to be held in Christchurch, New Zealand, practically in the bag, the Filipinos are working extra hard to win the Asian eliminations as decisively as possible to earn the respect of softball powers like reigning titlist New Zealand and the United States.

Three slots for the world meet are at stake in the Asian qualifying tournament.

Three other games complete the opening program of the tournament organized by the Amateur Softball Association of the Philippines headed by Manila Rep. Harry C. Angping and sponsored by Toyota, the Department of Tourism, PLDT, San Miguel Corp., Asia Brewery, Philippine Sports Commission, Philippine Tobacco Institute and Cemex.

The Blu Boys and the Iranians take to the field at 2 p.m. following the simple opening ceremony starting at 1 p.m.

Three other members of the present team—outfielders Joel Binarao, Joselito Binarao and Orlando Binarao—also saw action for the Blu Boys in the last world meet where the Philippines finished ninth in a field of 16.

PBL games at UST gym

FASH Liquid Detergent and Montaña try to stay close to the top spot when they tackle separate opponents today in the PBL Platinum Cup at the UST gym. Tied with 3-2 records behind idle leader Welcoat (5-1), the Liquid Power and the Jewels face the Sunkist Tigers and the ICTSI Archers, respectively. Montaña is expected to pour out its frustration on ICTSI (2-3) in the 1:45 p.m. opening game. Fash is looking for a third straight win in its 3:45 p.m. game against Sunkist

JORDAN F1 boss Eddie Jordan (center) with Sy (left) and Goddard.

Young RP driver closer to F1 dream

THE DREAM of having a Filipino in Formula One is slowly turning into reality after the top Filipino driver in the Formula BMW Asia Rookie Championship, Tyson Sy, met with the flamboyant Jordan F1 team boss Eddie Jordan in Macau last weekend.

As part of the Macau's 50th Grand Prix anniversary, Jordan brought its 2003 F1 car and made history as the first modern F1 car to go around Macau's tight circuit. Macau is acknowledged as the unofficial Formula Three world championship where F1 champions like the late Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher have all won in the past.

"I am very happy to have met Mr. Jordan and his team," said Sy after the meeting. "I feel more inspired now to get into F1 soon and represent the Philippines."

Only 16 years old and hailed as the newest racing sensation of local racing, Tyson took second overall in this year's FBMW Asia Rookie championship.

"Tyson has a lot of natural talent and speed," said veteran formula driver Mark Goddard, Sy's manager. "Hopefully, the logistics will fall into place to get him there."

Isada, Guevarra triumph

IVAN Isada and Art Guevarra, driving for Team Ultron, topped the Petron Rallye ng Pilipinas recently to clinch both the overall series winner and the national championship titles for this year.

The duo finished 26 seconds clear of Team Bonus' Dindo de Jesus and Ricky Santiago, and pipped third-placer Ramon Santiago and Bing Ibaviosa by 2 minutes in the grueling 122-kilometer rallye around the Naval Magazine Area inside Subic, Olongapo.

Fourth place went to the teamup of Jun Diaz and Armin Amio while the fifth spot was bagged by Kenneth Dominador and Egai Ortiz Luis.

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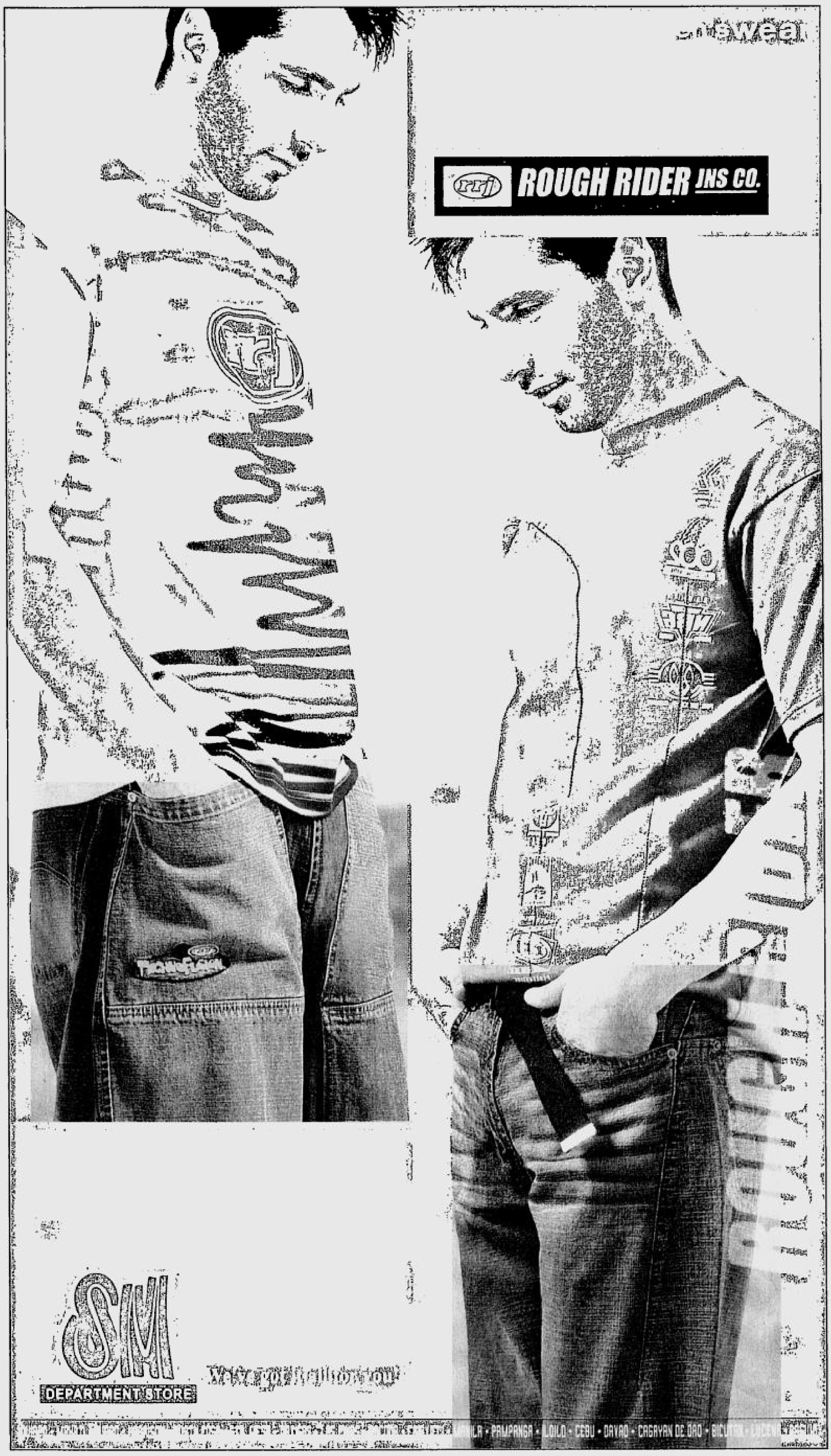

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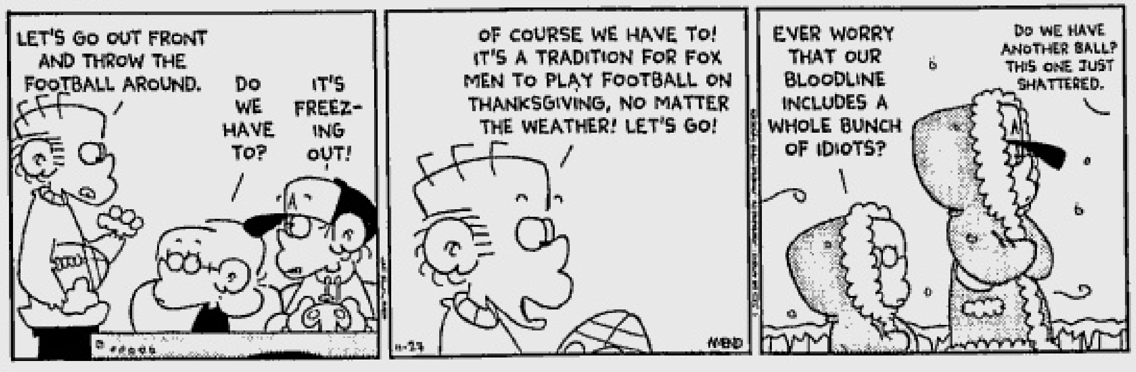
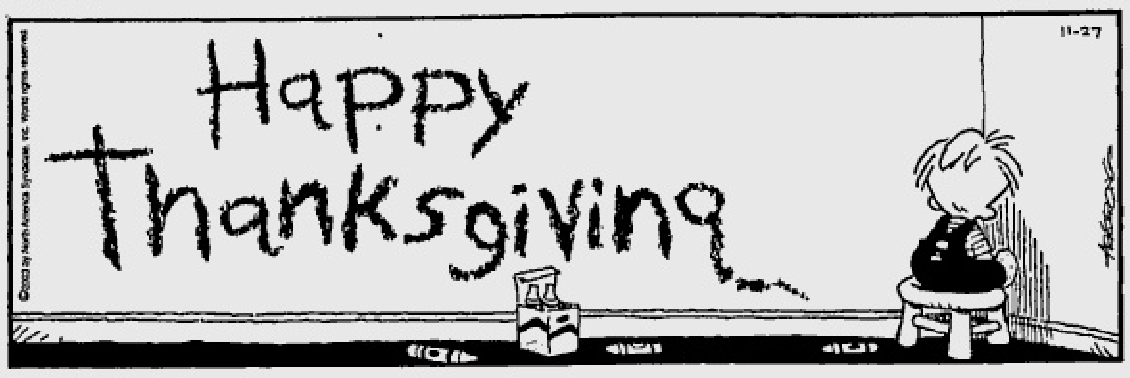
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


LET'S GO OUT FRONT AND THROW THE FOOTBALL AROUND.
DO WE HAVE TO?
IT'S FREEZING OUT!
OF COURSE WE HAVE TO! IT'S A TRADITION FOR FOX MEN TO PLAY FOOTBALL ON THANKSGIVING, NO MATTER THE WEATHER! LET'S GO!
11-27
AMEND
EVER WORRY THAT OUR BLOODLINE INCLUDES A WHOLE BUNCH OF IDIOTS?
DO WE HAVE ANOTHER BALL? THIS ONE JUST SHATTERED.

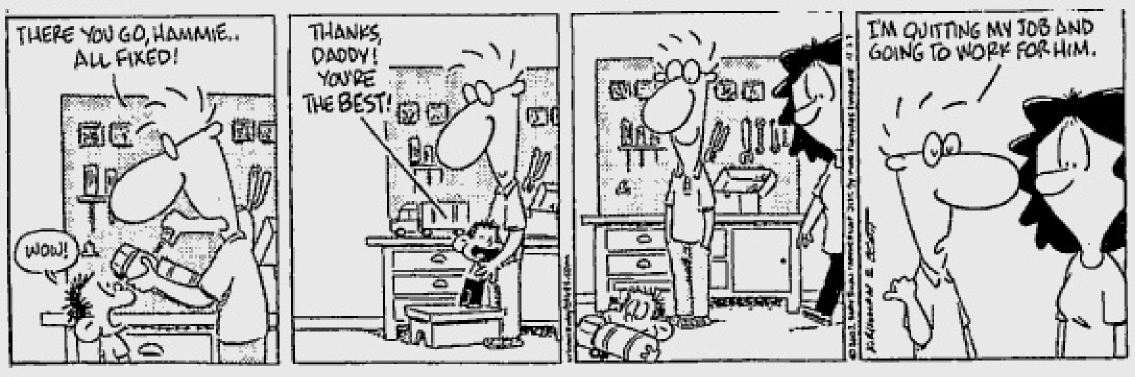
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


11-27
Happy Thanksgiving

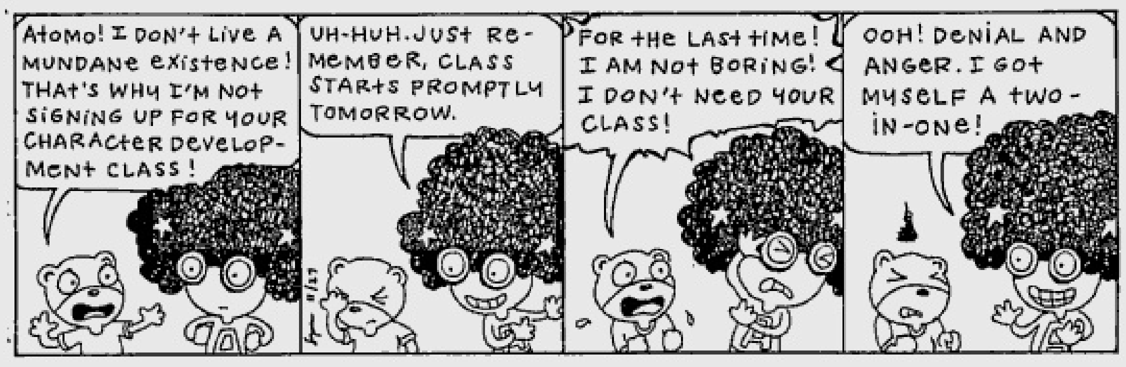
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


THERE YOU GO, HAMMIE.. ALL FIXED!
WOW!
THANKS, DADDY! YOU'RE THE BEST!
I'M QUITTING MY JOB AND GOING TO WORK FOR HIM.

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Atomo! I DON'T LIVE A MUNDANE EXISTENCE! THAT'S WHY I'M NOT SIGNING UP FOR YOUR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT CLASS!
UH-HUH. JUST REMEMBER, CLASS STARTS PROMPTLY TOMORROW.
FOR THE LAST TIME! I AM NOT BORING! I DON'T NEED YOUR CLASS!
OOH! DENIAL AND ANGER. I GOT MYSELF A TWO-IN-ONE!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're quick and impulsive. You generate excitement wherever you go, because you work with great bursts of energy. You need emotional support from your friends and environment; nevertheless, you demand absolute freedom for yourself. The year ahead could be one of the most powerful years of your life.

Birthdate of: L. Sprague DeCamp, writer; Bruce Lee, martial-arts master; Jimi Hendrix, musician.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): In the next few weeks, you can expect favorable circumstances in your business and professional lives. Suddenly, you're on excellent terms with your boss. (Great!)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Loved ones might show you new ways of thinking or teach you about different cultures and foreign art. This opportunity will exist for several weeks.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Lucky you! In the next few weeks, all sorts of gifts, goodies and treats will come your way. It appears that the universe owes you a favor.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): A number of planets are starting to congregate opposite your sign. This means that for the month ahead, you'll learn more about yourself through your relationships with others.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your health is improving now. However, sweets and desserts might tempt you in the next few weeks. Work is supportive now, so you won't be eating because you're anxious.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Love and romance are starting to bloom in your heart. New love might appear, and existing relationships will be rejuvenated by awakened appreciation for each other.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have a strong desire to make where you live look more beautiful now. This is actually a hobby for you. That's because more than any other sign, you're affected by your surroundings.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): It's all too easy to take for granted the people you encounter daily. You would be grief-stricken to hear of the loss of someone. Why not tell others how much you care now?

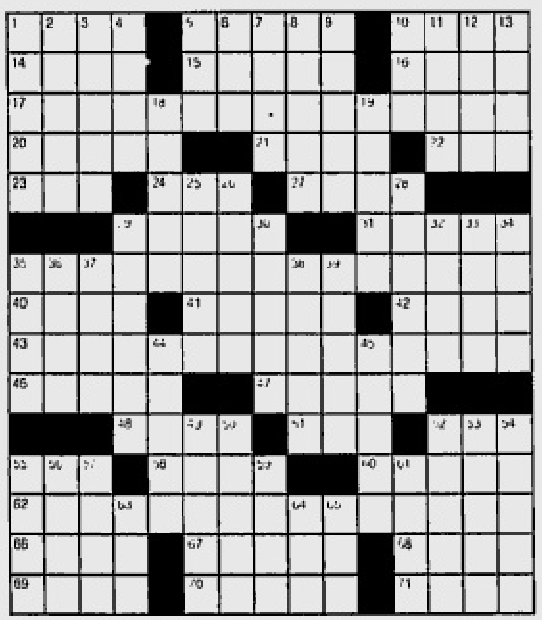
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You have the power to attract material possessions and money to you in the next month. However, this same planetary energy causes you to spend on luxury as well. (Oops.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): In the weeks ahead, you will find that you have opportunities to make peace where there was conflict. Your skills at diplomacy will promote harmony wherever you go.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): It's easy for you to put the needs of others before your own now. It's not because you are a martyr or that you're into self-denial, it's because you truly want to help someone.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Expect increased social occasions in the next few weeks. Romantic liaisons become friendlier. (Friends become lovers, and lovers become friends.)

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Roger Jurgovan
Potomac, MD

11/27/03

ACROSS

1 Lohengrin's love
5 Of lung sections
10 Tendril
14 Edges
15 Plant swelling
16 Redolence
17 Start of a Mae West quip
20 Show biz personality
21 Zone
22 Cut (off)
23 Is for two?
24 Alphabet openers
27 Goddess of discord
29 "__ Shrugged"
31 Tibetan monks
35 Part 2 of quip
40 Gymnast Korbut
41 Gang and mob endings
42 Privy to
43 Part 3 of quip
46 Morley of "60 Minutes"
47 Bart or Belle
48 Christen
51 Theater sign letters
52 Mortar trough
55 Rhythmic patter
58 Male progeny
60 Daughter of Tantalus
62 End of quip
66 Soft drink
67 Rainbow fish
68 Otherwise
69 Choir selection
70 Promotes heavily
71 Clairvoyant

DOWN

1 Writer Jong
2 Permanent prisoner
3 Happy expression
4 U.S. tennis great
5 Third bk. of the Bible
6 Lyric poem
7 __ carotene
8 Dean Martin hit, "That's __"
9 Pro driver
10 Court
11 Object of devotion
12 Mediocre
13 Spadework
18 Diminish
19 __ Selassie
25 Sanctified
26 Pound poem part
28 White knight
29 Rouse
30 Process parts
32 Neighbor of Wisc.
33 Balm ingredient
34 Federal IDs
35 Woods in Paris
36 Songstress Fitzgerald
37 Wage-slave's refrain
38 Court orders
39 Hollywood idol?
44 Obliterate
45 Jockey Julie
49 May or June
50 Portal
52 Games authority
53 Much overweight
54 Dissuade
55 Opulent
56 Nautical call
57 Pick up stealthily
59 Halt
61 Middle of March
63 Pianist Cliburn
64 Regret
65 "__ Now or Never"

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

T	A	B	O	O	■	Q	U	I	P	■	A	D	A	M
A	R	E	N	A	■	U	R	S	A	■	S	I	L	O
P	I	L	O	T	L	I	G	H	T	■	T	R	A	P
E	S	T	■	M	O	L	E	■	S	E	R	E	N	E
D	E	S	S	E	R	T	■	H	A	V	O	C	■	■
■	■	■	P	A	D	■	M	A	J	E	S	T	I	C
R	E	G	A	L	■	F	E	T	A	L	■	H	A	L
E	M	U	S	■	T	R	A	C	K	■	R	I	G	A
A	M	I	■	T	E	E	T	H	■	P	I	T	O	N
M	A	D	M	O	N	E	Y	■	B	A	N	■	■	■
■	■	E	A	R	N	S	■	H	A	C	K	S	A	W
P	U	L	L	E	Y	■	W	E	R	E	■	T	W	A
A	S	I	A	■	S	T	E	E	R	C	L	E	A	R
S	E	N	D	■	O	W	E	D	■	A	E	R	I	E
T	R	E	Y	■	N	O	D	S	■	R	E	N	T	S

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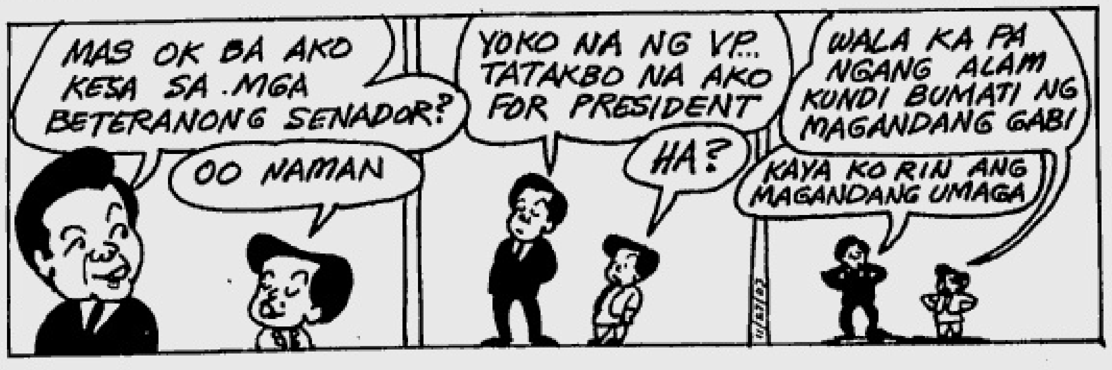
11/27/03

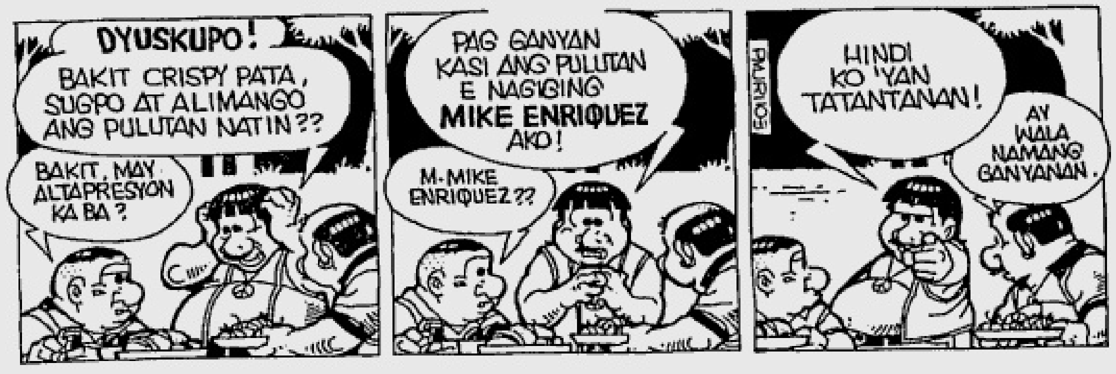
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MAS OK BA AKO KESA SA MGA BETERANONG SENADOR?
OO NAMAN
YOKO NA NG V.P.... TATAKBO NA AKO FOR PRESIDENT
HA?
WALA KA PA NGANG ALAM KUNDI BUMATI NG MAGANDANG GABI
KAYA KO RIN ANG MAGANDANG UMAGA

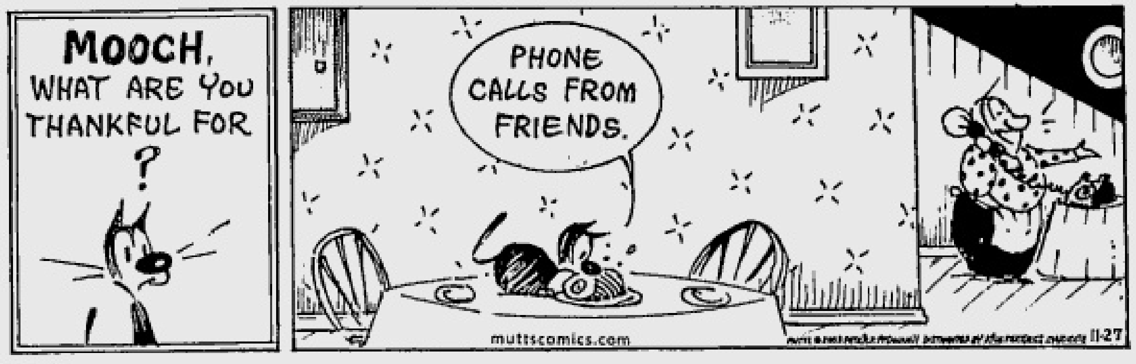
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


DYUSKUPO!
BAKIT CRISPY PATA, SUGPO AT ALIMANGO ANG PULUTAN NATIN??
BAKIT, MAY ALTAPRESYON KA BA?
PAG GANYAN KASI ANG PULUTAN E NAGIGING MIKE ENRIQUEZ AKO!
M-MIKE ENRIQUEZ??
HINDI KO 'YAN TATANTANAN!
AY WALA NAMANG GANYANAN.

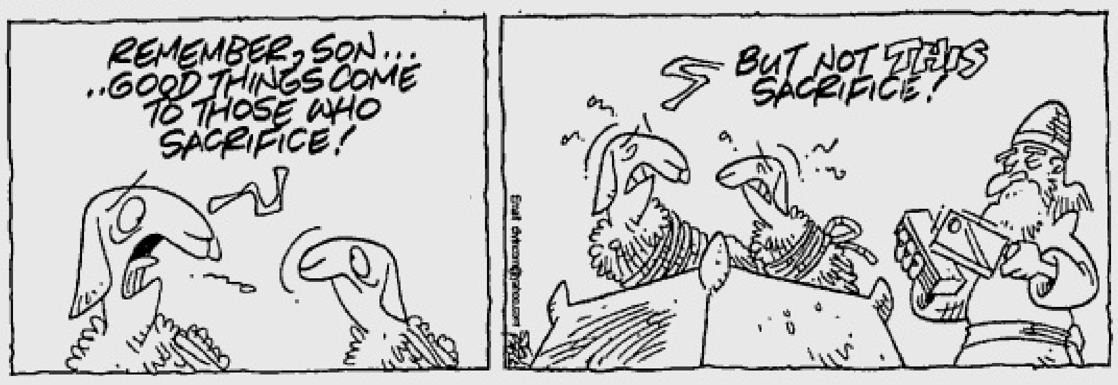
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MOOCH, WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR ?
PHONE CALLS FROM FRIENDS.
muttscomics.com
11-27

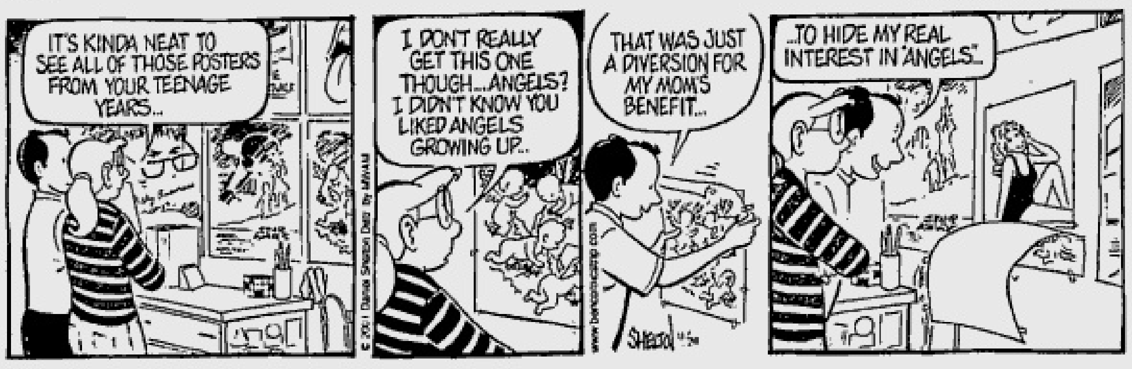
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


REMEMBER, SON... ..GOOD THINGS COME TO THOSE WHO SACRIFICE!
BUT NOT THIS SACRIFICE!

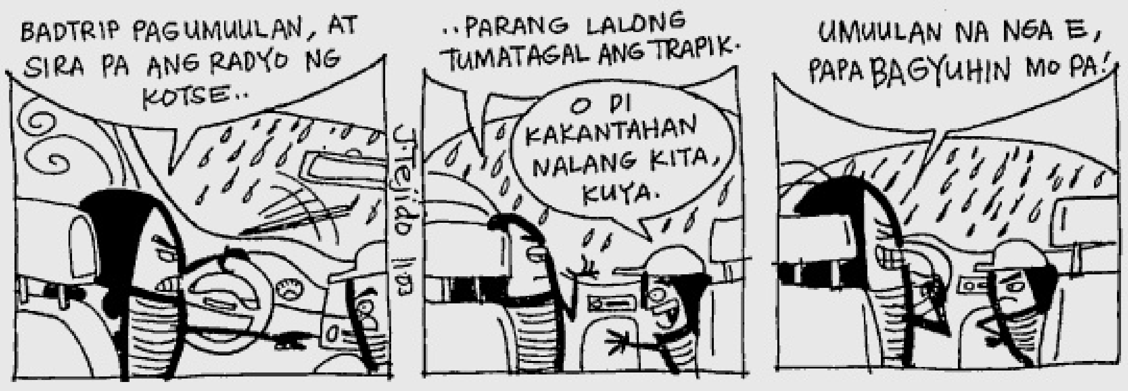
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


IT'S KINDA NEAT TO SEE ALL OF THOSE POSTERS FROM YOUR TEENAGE YEARS...
I DON'T REALLY GET THIS ONE THOUGH...ANGELS? I DIDN'T KNOW YOU LIKED ANGELS GROWING UP..
THAT WAS JUST A DIVERSION FOR MY MOM'S BENEFIT...
...TO HIDE MY REAL INTEREST IN "ANGELS".

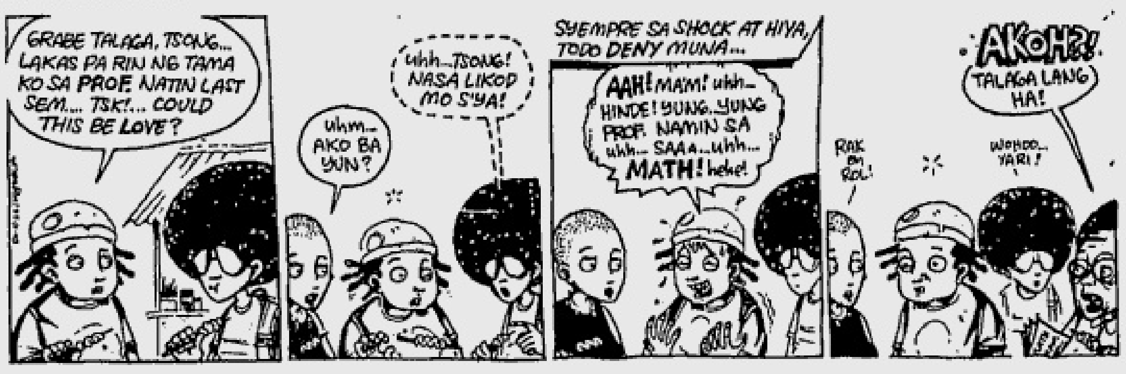
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BADTRIP PAGUMUULAN, AT SIRA PA ANG RADYO NG KOTSE..
J.Tejido 11-03
..PARANG LALONG TUMATAGAL ANG TRAPIK.
O DI KAKANTAHAN NALANG KITA, KUYA.
UMUULAN NA NGA E, PAPA BAGYUHIN MO PA!

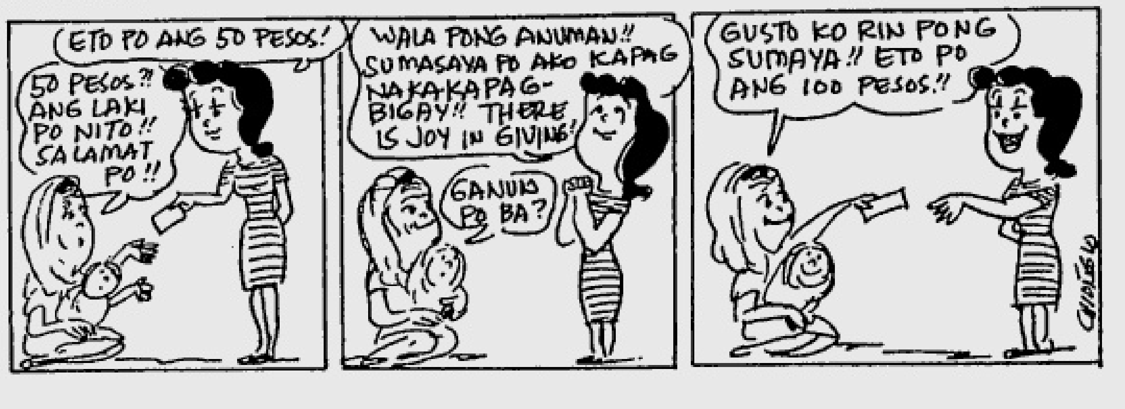
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


GRABE TALAGA, TSONG... LAKAS PA RIN NG TAMA KO SA PROF. NATIN LAST SEM.... TSK!... COULD THIS BE LOVE?
uhm... AKO BA YUN?
uhh...TSONG! NASA LIKOD MO S'YA!
SYEMPRE SA SHOCK AT HIYA, TODO DENY MUNA...
AAH! MAM! uhh-HINDE! YUNG..YUNG PROF. NAMIN SA uhh... SAAA...uhh... MATH! hehe!
RAK EN ROL!
AKOH?!
TALAGA LANG HA!
WOHOO... YARI!

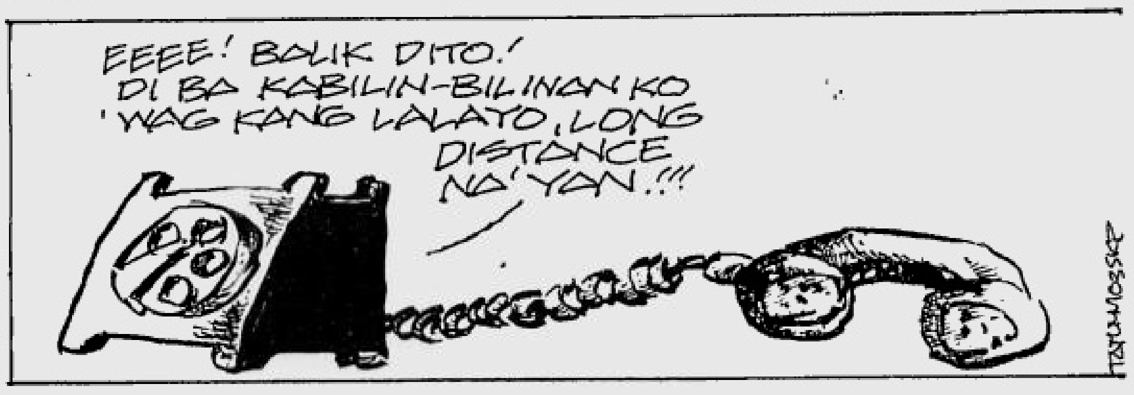
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ETO PO ANG 50 PESOS!
50 PESOS?! ANG LAKI PO NITO!! SALAMAT PO!!
WALA PONG ANUMAN!! SUMASAYA PO AKO KAPAG NAKAKAPAGBIGAY!! THERE IS JOY IN GIVING!
GANUN PO BA?
GUSTO KO RIN PONG SUMAYA!! ETO PO ANG 100 PESOS!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


EEEE! BALIK DITO! DI BA KABILIN-BILINAN KO 'WAG KANG LALAYO, LONG DISTANCE NA 'YAN!!!

Tours, Leisure & Chow

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897-8808 local 209 and 238

Alden Joshua Cedo, Graphics Design

Readers of Time vote Mactan Shang favorite resort

SHANGRI-LA'S Mactan Island Resort was voted Favorite Resort Hotel and Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, Favorite Hotel Chain in Asia in the third annual Time Readers' Travel Choice Awards Survey.

This is the third time for the group to receive this prestigious award. In addition, Makati Shangri-La, Manila was voted joint runner-up in the Favorite Business Hotel category whilst the Shangri-La Hotel, Singapore was awarded joint runner-up in the Favorite Resort Hotel category.

The survey was open to Time's readers in Asia and the award winners were voted by the magazine's elite audience of decision makers, based on their preference of Asia's top brands in the travel sector. 'The 2003 awards not only acknowledge an overall standard of excellence at the winning hotels, they are also testament to each hotel's outstanding customer service and amenities', according to Andrew Butcher, president and publisher of Time International.

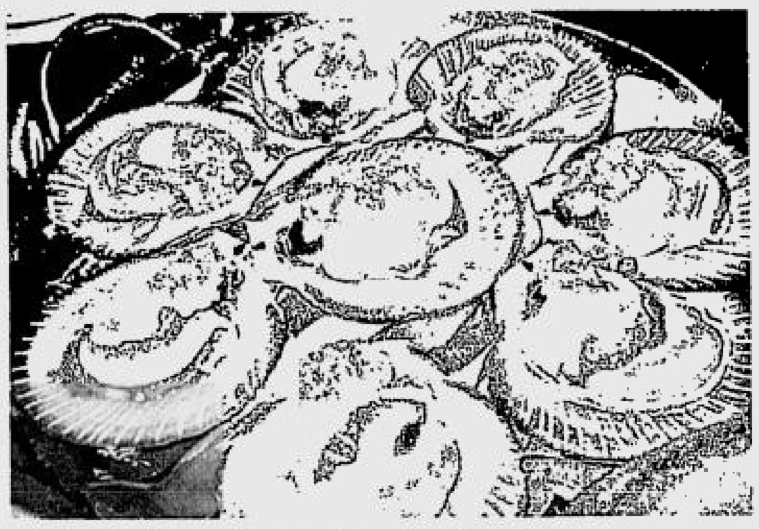
General manager Desmond Hatton adds, "We are honored to have won the trust of Time magazine's readers. This award attests to the tireless dedication to customer service by the whole team." Photo shows (from left) Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts Phils chair Tomas Zita, Mactan Shangri-La GM Desmond Hatton and Kerry Properties president Edward Kuok who flew in specially to congratulate the whole team.

Hong Kong-based Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts currently manages 41 hotels in Australia, mainland China, Fiji, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates, with a rooms inventory of over 21,000. It has over 20 projects under development in Australia, Dubai, India, mainland China, Malaysia, Maldives, Oman, Qatar and Thailand.

In Cebu, it operates the 547-room Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort located in Lapu Lapu City. The first ISO-14001 certified resort in the country, it won the "Deluxe Hotel of the Year" in the 2001 Kalakbay Awards given by the Department of Tourism. It was also awarded the "Five Star Diamond Award" given by the American Academy of Hospitality Science four years in a row and was chosen as one of the Child-Friendly Firms in Cebu by the Employers Federation of the Philippines (Ecop) and the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCCI).

The resort was also listed as one of the Best Resorts in Asia Pacific 2003 by Business Traveller Magazine.

Sensational Scallops at the New World Renaissance Hotel



NEW WORLD Renaissance Hotel's premiere Cantonese restaurant Emperor Court presents "Sensational Scallops" for the months of November and December. Feast on succulent scallop creations in a special a la carte menu prepared by master Chinese Executive Chef Ken Chiu and his brigade of expert chefs. Sample Deep-fried Scallops and Seafood Combination, Baked Whole Fresh Scallops with Crab Meat Salad in Shell, Stewed Scallops with Black Mushrooms "Shanghai" Style, Steamed Live Scallops, Spicy Fried Rice Noodles with Scallops and Mixed Seafood among many other mouth-watering selections. Furthermore, take advantage of Emperor Court's Perfect 10 Deal wherein a minimum group of 10 diners get a generous 10 percent discount on their bill. Emperor Court is open daily from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. for lunch and 6 to 10 p.m. for dinner. For more information and reservations, please call 811-6888 ext. 3338

A hearty Thanksgiving Dinner Buffet at The Bellevue Hotel

THE BELLEVUE Hotel continues to be the new dining mecca in the southern Metro Manila area with its flavorful food offerings and inventive cuisine. In the tradition of holiday cheer, Alabang's preferred residence offers the Thanksgiving Dinner Buffet promo for diners with distinctive tastes only for today.

For only P650+, guests have the chance to sample a truly authentic American-style Thanksgiving dinner complete with roast turkey in all its home-cooked goodness. What's more, the atmosphere at The Bellevue Hotel's main dining area, the Café d' Asie, comes with the comfort and warmth that you can only associate with home.

The Bellevue Hotel, an impressive structure of sophistication and splendor, is the definitive social and business destination south of Metro Manila. The "beautiful view," as its name is translated from French, represents only the best that business hotels offer-elegance, efficient service, friendly staff, convenient location, superb food, modern amenities and exciting activities-at affordable prices.

The hotel with five-star appointments is nestled inside an information technology zone within the Filinvest Corporate City. It boasts of 222 deluxe and suite rooms, modern communications and banquet facilities, an entertainment lounge on its top floor, swimming pool, the latest in fitness services and spa treatments. For inquiries and reservations, please call 771-8181.

Dusit Hotel Nikko's children's choir

FOR the past years, Dusit Hotel Nikko has made it a tradition to have children as the center of the hotel's Christmases. This Christmas, the hotel lobby will once again be filled up with their little voices. Dusit Hotel will have at least 1,500 children from ages 4-9 years old coming from some 28 exclusive schools starting Nov. 28, 6 p.m. coinciding the lighting of the hotel's Christmas tree. There will be daily performances at the hotel's posh lobby until December 21, same time on weekdays and on weekends at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Guests may expect to experience the heartwarming performances of the choirs from the following schools: Esteban International School (Nov. 28), School of the Holy Spirit (Dec. 1), St. Theresa's College (Dec. 2), Lourdes School of Mandaluyong (Dec. 3), St. Paul's Pasig (Dec. 4), OB Montessori Sta. Ana (Dec. 5), St. Benedict College (Dec. 6), Manresa School (Dec.6), British School Manila (Dec. 7), Letran College (Dec. 7), German School (Dec. 8), Maria Montessori Children's School Foundation (Dec. 9), Don Bosco Makati (Dec. 10), International School of Manila (Dec. 11), OB Montessori Las Pinas (Dec. 12), Jubilee Christian Academy (Dec. 13), Kostka School of Marikina (Dec. 13), Colegio Sta. Rosa (Dec. 14), Angelicum College (Dec. 14), Brent Int'l School of Manila (Dec. 15), Stella Maris College (Dec. 16), Colegio San Agustin (Dec. 17), Paref Woodrose School Inc. (Dec. 18), Ateneo de Manila University (Dec. 19), Golden Values (Dec. 20), Makati Montessori Educational Center (Dec. 20), Dela Salle Greenhills (Dec. 21), Kostka School of Quezon City (Dec.21), SOS Children's Village Phils. (Dec. 22) and Jesus Loves the Little Children Foundation (Dec. 23).

For queries, please call 867-3333

People, Events & Products

The truth about yogurt

HERE are some common myths and enlightening truths about yogurt to help you get started on the road to good health:

Myth: Yogurt tastes sour.

Fact: Yogurt products today do not taste unpleasantly sour. Manufacturers have added fruit pieces so yogurt can be enjoyed as a healthy snack.

Myth: Yogurt is for dieters and old people.

Fact: It is a fact that yogurt keeps the body in good condition since every cup is packed with millions of beneficial microorganisms that keep the digestive system in great shape. And it is the amazing healthfulness of yogurt that makes it suitable for everyone - male and female, young and old, healthy and tummy-troubled.

Myth: All yogurts are the same.

Fact: If you think all yogurts are created equal, think again. Some yogurts in the market do not contain live microorganisms so they cannot be considered real yogurt. While heat-treated or sterilized yogurt products stay longer on grocery shelves and do not require refrigerated storage, the microorganisms present in them have been destroyed so they cannot give the complete health benefits of yogurt.

Myth: Like milk, yogurt is bad for the lactose in tolerant.

Fact: When yogurt is manufactured, lactose is significantly lessened by 20 to 30 percent so that the lactose deficient can better tolerate fermented milk. Also, the live microorganisms in yogurt provide their own lactase and assist the body in breaking down sugars that can be directly absorbed by the body.

Myth: Yogurt is boring.

Fact: This thousand-year old concoction is anything but passé. In the olden days, people gulped yogurt and lived to a ripe old age. Today, healthy living has become cool and "in" and yogurt is now being enjoyed by hip cliques, the fashion-conscious set, and smart young achievers who want to keep their bodies in tip-top shape.

With Nestle Fruit Selection Yogurt, healthy is trendy. Make it a habit to spoon down the delicious goodness of Nestle Fruit Selection Yogurt everyday. The truth is out: yogurt is live, yummy and for everybody.

Where to Stop
Where to GO

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

New World Renaissance Hotel
Esperanza St. cor. makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 811-6888/Fax. 811-6777
www.marriott.com

Makati Shangri-La Hotel
Ayala Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City
Tel. 813-8888/ Fax 813-5499
www.shangri-la.com

Dusit Hotel Nikko
Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City Phil.
Tel. 867-3333 Email: dusitmnl@dusit.com
http://manila.dusit.com

Barcelo Hotels and Resorts
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Teresa: Cesar can see his son anytime

From page A32

spend a day with his son."

Musically inclined

Carlos Diego is now in Grade 3 at St. Adan's in Sydney, according to Teresa. He plays rugby, likes music, and is interested in playing the violin and piano.

She said she has not seen Cesar since she arrived last September and she has no idea where to contact him. She only read about Cesar wanting to see Carlos Diego in the story in this section last Tuesday, she added.

She said she will go back to Sydney on Sunday. She will be starting on a new job as a flight attendant for Quantas on Dec. 1, she said.

Donna Villa: Let's...

From page A32

Only the start of the trial was covered in the film. Governor Singson has a very colorful life and we want to show what a survivor he is to inspire those struggling out there. Imagine, he survived more than nine ambushes.

Kumbaga, talo pa niya ang pusa na may nine lives. At 21, he was already the chief of police of Vigan and due to public clamor, he became a councilor. He was an accidental politician."

"I call this movie a cinematic docu. We stuck to the facts. To lighten things up, we also showed his love affair with a former beauty queen. But to focus on his love life... well, that should be a different movie altogether," he added with a laugh, "because of the number of women involved.

"Chavit" stars **Cesar Montano** in the title role, with **Eddie Garcia** and **Dina Bonnevie**.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare-@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com

Role of media...

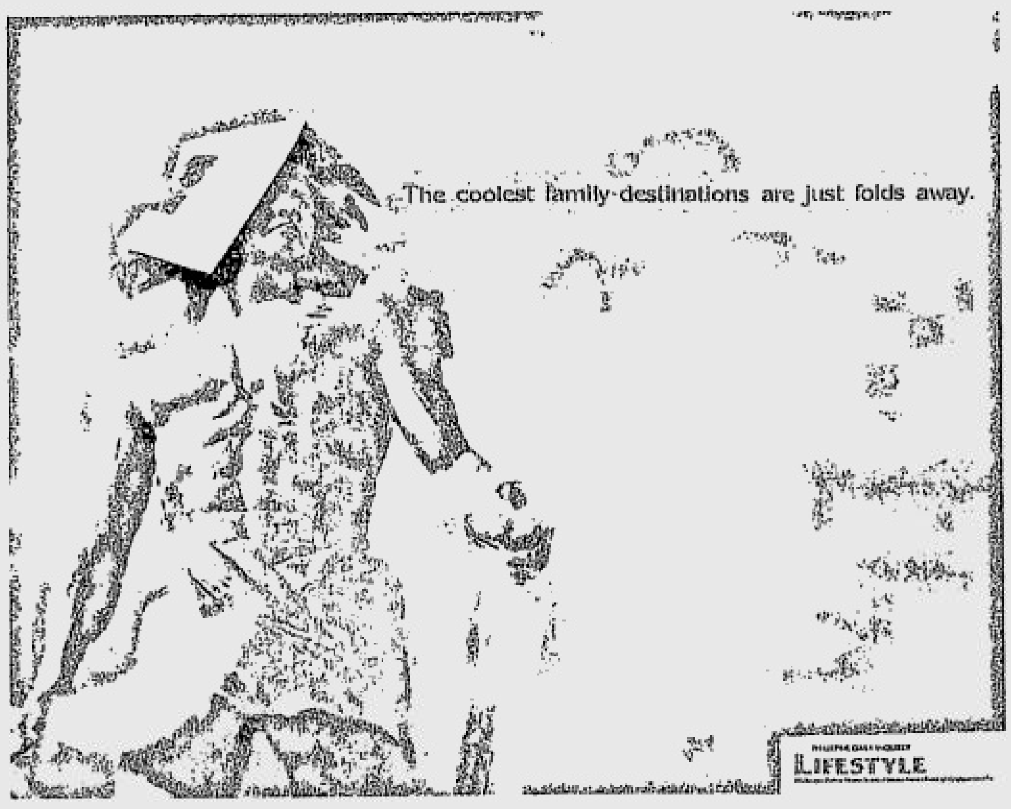
From page A31

day at 12:30 p.m. on Thursdays. Replays are on Thursday midnight and at 6 a.m. on Friday.

Recent guests include "couples in business": **Fred and Carleen Reyes** of Godiva Inc., **Geo and Maite Gregorio** of Cake Concepts, and **Rudy and Angeli Salcedo** of Angeli Glass.

'Mystic River' premiere

THE INVITATIONAL gala premiere of **Clint Eastwood**'s acclaimed new film, "Mystic River," will be held today at the Podium. The thriller stars **Sean Penn, Kevin Bacon, Tim Robbins, Laurence Fishburne, Laura Linney** and **Marcia Gay Harden**.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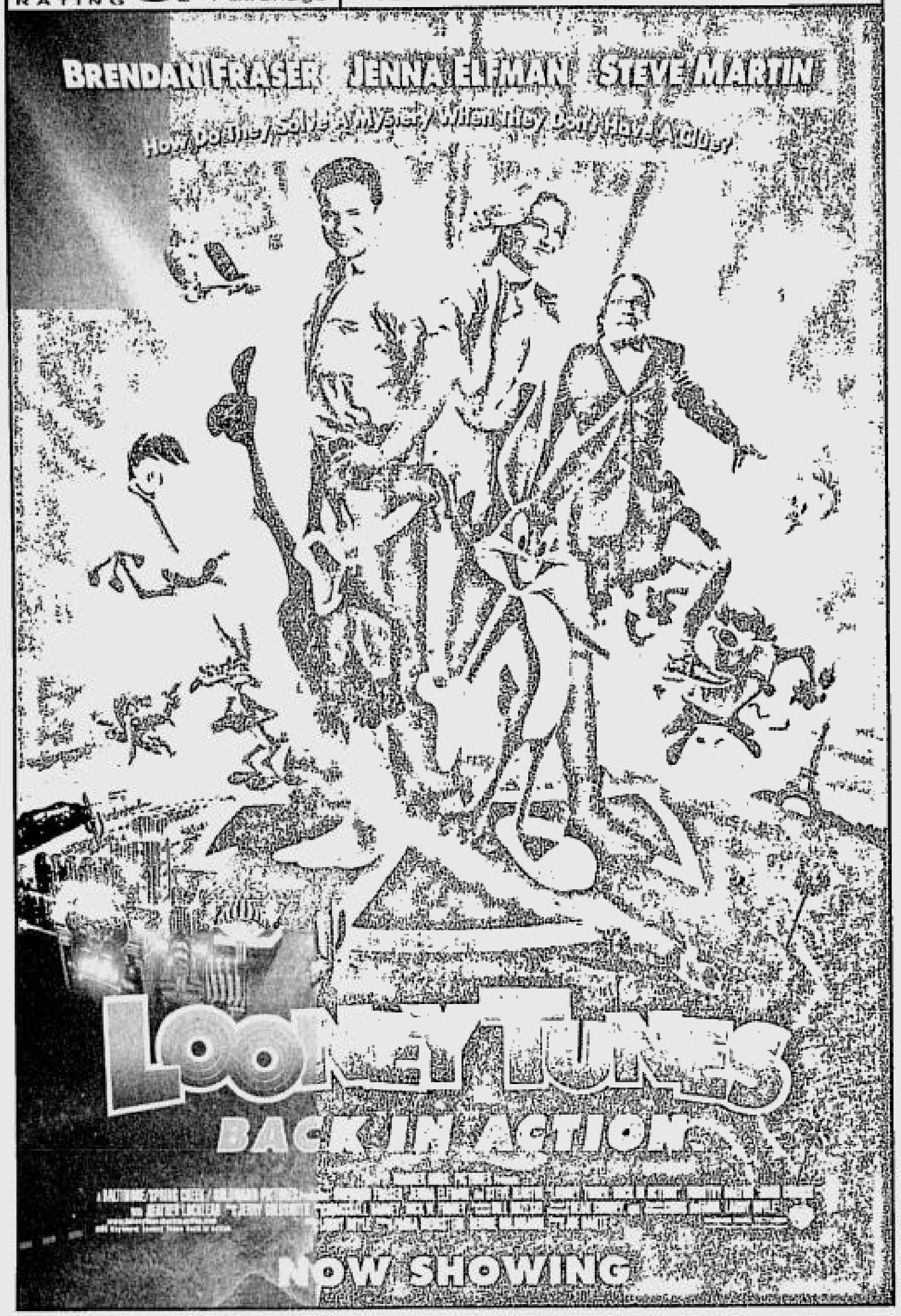
BRENDAN FRASER JENNA ELFMAN STEVE MARTIN
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LOONEY TUNES
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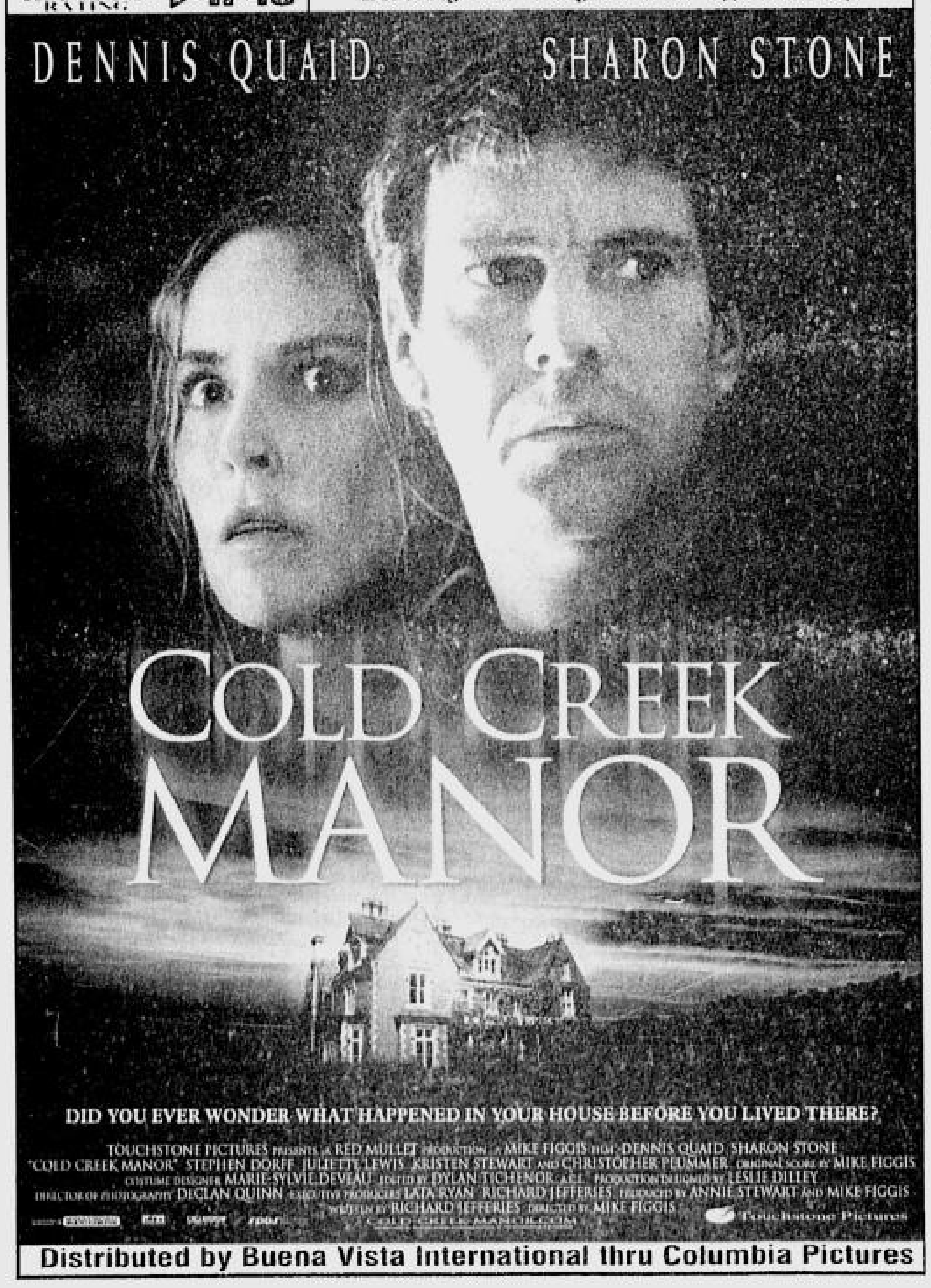
DENNIS QUAID SHARON STONE
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DID YOU EVER WONDER WHAT HAPPENED IN YOUR HOUSE BEFORE YOU LIVED THERE?
TOUCHSTONE PICTURES PRESENTS A RED MULLET PRODUCTION A MIKE FIGGIS FILM DENNIS QUAID SHARON STONE "COLD CREEK MANOR" STEPHEN DORFF JULIETTE LEWIS KRISTEN STEWART AND CHRISTOPHER PLUMMER ORIGINAL SCORE BY MIKE FIGGIS COSTUME DESIGNER MARIE-SYLVIE DEVEAU EDITED BY DYLAN TICHENOR A.C.E. PRODUCTION DESIGNED BY LESLIE DILLEY DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY DECLAN QUINN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS LATA RYAN RICHARD JEFFERIES PRODUCED BY ANNIE STEWART AND MIKE FIGGIS WRITTEN BY RICHARD JEFFERIES DIRECTED BY MIKE FIGGIS
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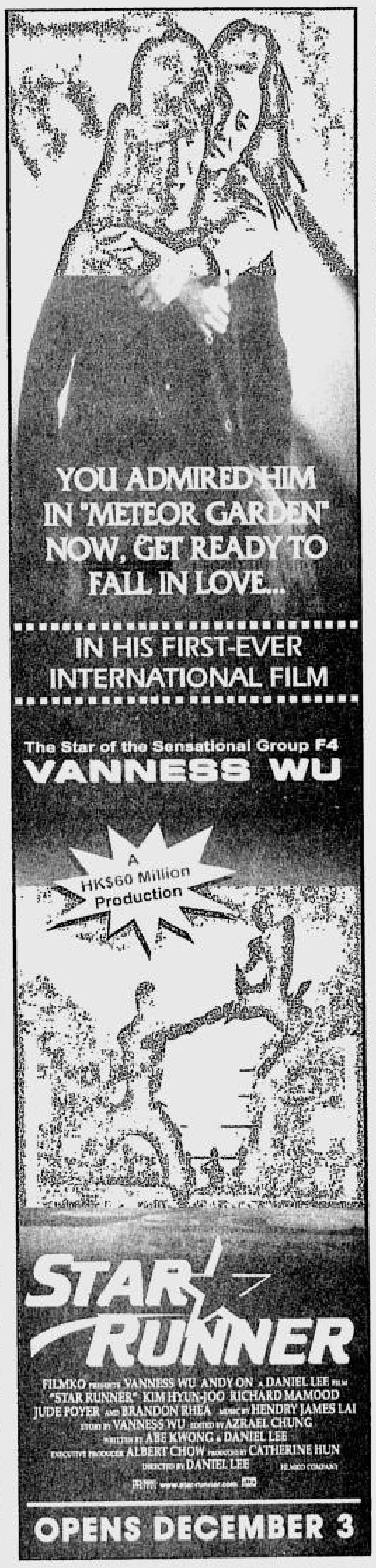
THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SEX SCANDAL
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	CHAVIT SINGSON
B	AKO, IKAW, SIYA
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MY FIRST ROMANCE
CINEMA-2	AKO, IKAW O SIYA
CINEMA-3	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LOONEY TUNES
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	MR SUAVE
CINEMA-6	WRONG TURN
CINEMA-7	SEX SCANDAL
CINEMA-8	CHAVIT
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	MASTER AND COMMANDER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LOONEY TUNES
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	COLD CREEK MANOR
CINEMA-12	MATRIX REVOLUTION
CINEMA-14	CHAVIT
CINEMA-15	MR SUAVE
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	MR SUAVE
CINEMA-1	UNDERWORLD
CINEMA-2	MY BOSS'S DAUGHTER
CINEMA-4	AMERICAN PSYCHO
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA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OPENS DECEMBER 3

Araneta Center ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	MR. SUAVE
Ali 2	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
Ali 3	CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
Ali 4	LOONEY TUNES
Ali 5	MASTER AND COMMANDER
Ali 6	SCARY MOVIE 3
Ali 7	AKO, IKAW, O SIYA
ARANETA COLISEUM	
NOV 28	GARY V. CONCERT
NOV 29	GARY V. CONCERT
NOV 30	PBA GAMES
DEC 3	PBA GAMES
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Role of media in psychosocial rehabilitation

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

ACCLAIMED filmmaker **Marilou Diaz-Abaya** is the keynote speaker at the fourth National Conference of the World Association for Psychosocial Rehabilitation Philippines on Nov. 28 and 29 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. She will address the conference on the important topic, "Psychosocial Rehabilitation in a Complex World."

This subject is of significant interest not just to counselors, psychologists and psychiatrists, but also to other people who are concerned about the difficulty of coping with the daunting complexities of life today.

Why was a film person like Marilou tapped to deliver a speech before an audience of psychiatrists, health and mental health professionals, and social workers? It turns out that she is a member of the board of WAPR-P, and strongly supports the organization's efforts to improve the quality of life of those who suffer from mental disorders.

WAPR-P pursues programs on psychosocial rehabilitation for persons with mental disorders and their caregivers, and works toward the destigmatization of those disorders. Since a significant number of Filipinos have problems related to mental health, these programs deserve everyone's support.

In this regard, WAPR-P believes that the family and caregivers play a significant role in the recovery and rehabilitation of people with mental disorders. So, psychological rehabilitation should involve not only the patients, but also their families and communities.

Aware of the importance of these objectives, Marilou has asked her colleagues in media to help the organization attain its goals, especially since this year's conference stresses the "partnership" approach in psychosocial rehabilitation, and the media are an important component of any effort to reach out to the public.

Thus, aside from Marilou, the conference also features a talk by the filmmaker's friend and colleague, sociologist and PDI columnist Prof. **Randy David**, on the role of society and media in psychosocial rehabilitation. There is also a workshop session that will discuss the role of media in the service of psychosocial rehabilitation.

Other lectures are on the burden of mental disorders, the availability of effective interventions, medications, individual approaches to treatment, family intervention programs, support groups, the continuing menace of substance abuse in relation to mental disorders, dual diagnosis, the recovery experience, strategies for psychosocial rehabilitation, and rehabilitation as part of clinical care.

It's good that arts and media people like Marilou and Randy are helping psychiatrists reach out to the general public to inform it about mental disorders and what can be done about them. Interested in the conference? Call WAPR-P at 371-3603, or e-mail: sallydb@edsamall.com.ph

WAPR-P officers are Lourdes Ladrido Ignacio, M.D., president; **Brigida S. Buenaseda**, M.D., vice president; **Eugenio P. Ladrido**, treasurer; **Rosita Nazal**, R.N., assistant treasurer; **Sally Domino Bongalonta**, secretary; **Javier J. Calero**, P.R.O.; and **Corazon Alma de Leon, Ma. Rosanna de Guzman, Eleonor Lacuna Ronquillo, Zita Felicitas Artiaga-Soriano** and Marilou Diaz-Abaya, board members.

MTV Debit Card

THE MTV Debit Card promotional campaign visits Robinsons Place Manila on Nov. 28, with prizes, surprises and music (by Barbie's Cradle).

People who get MTV Debit Cards could be among the 10 winners of a Casio EX-M2 Digital Camera with MP3 function, or one of the 20 winners of P5,000, to be credited to their debit or prepaid card.

The MTV Debit Card is a Visa Electron cobranded card between MTV Networks Asia and Equitable CardNetwork Inc. that is linked to an Equitable PCIBank peso current/savings account or dollar savings account. It can purchase goods and services from over 12 million Visa Electron merchants worldwide and make cash withdrawals from over 6,000 ATMs locally and over 750,000 Visa Plus ATMs worldwide.

Channel [V] VJs

CHANNEL [V] International VJs **Sarah, Cindy** and **Amanda** and a male VJ will meet the media at noon today at Pepato in Greenbelt 2, and programming director **Jeff Selamatu** will answer questions.

Later, the VJs will do radio and TV interviews and have picture and autograph-signing sessions in various venues in Metro Manila.

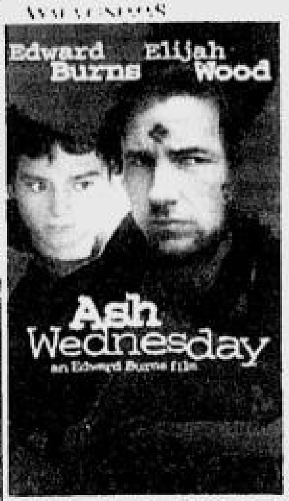
DID YOU KNOW...

Last Thursday night during the Ad Congress in Baguio City, **Martin Nievera** was in the Manor Hotel coffee shop with rumored girlfriend **Cutie del Mar**. Flutist **Jong Cuenco**, the featured entertainer that night, asked Martin to jam with him on stage, and the singer obliged, to the delight of the crowd.

'Dee's Day'

DEEDEE **Siytangco** hosts the alternative noontime talk show, "Dee's Day," every Thurs-

ROLE/ A30



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Ash Wednesday

Hells Kitchen, Ash Wednesday, 1980. Sean Sullivan (Elijah Wood) is killed in a vendetta. Three years later, Seans brother Francis (Edward Burns) receives word that Sean may be alive. But the truth isnt always what it seems in this neighborhood, where violence and betrayal are the local currency.

"Suspenseful and ultimately unpredictable, with a sterling ensemble cast."
--- Kevin Thomas, L.A. Times

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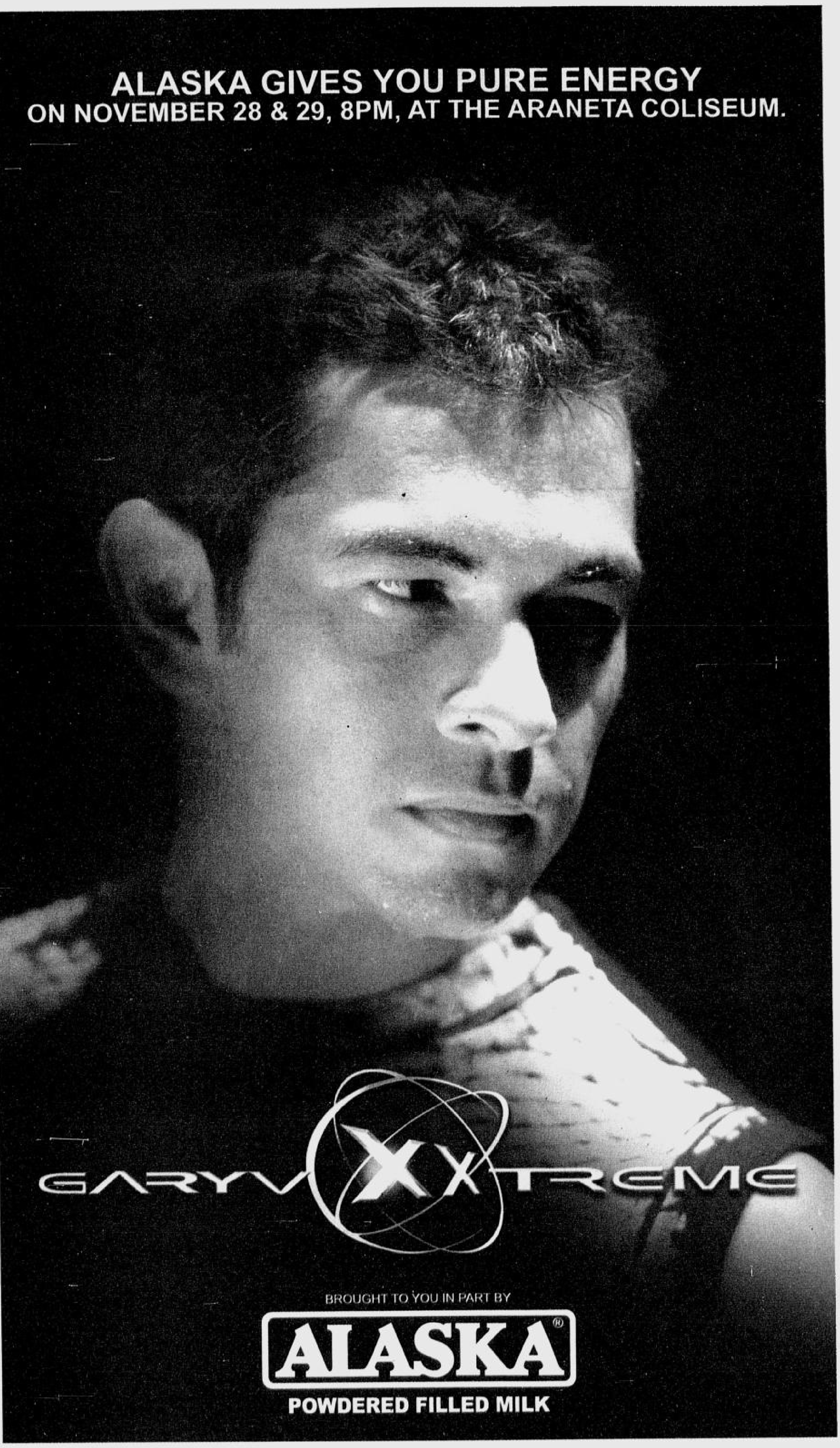

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Editor Louie C. Camino

FILE PHOTO

MONTANO. His son looks very much like him, says another son.

Teresa: Cesar can see his son anytime he wants

By Nini Valera

ACTOR Cesar Montano can always see his 8-year-old son with his ex-lover, Teresa Loyzaga, any time he wants to, according to the former singer-actress.

Teresa said she is wondering why Cesar has not contacted her if he really wants to see their son.

Teresa, 38, who is based in Sydney, Australia, with her two sons, arrived in Manila last September to visit her family. She called up INQUIRER Entertainment yesterday to correct the name and age of their son and where they live in Australia. In a story in this section last Tuesday ("Cesar: I hope my son still knows me"), Cesar had said the boy's name was Caloy Diego and he was 7.

"My son's name is Carlos Diego, not Caloy Diego," Teresa said yesterday. "He is not 7, he's 8. Also, we do not live in Melbourne, we live in Sydney."

40 minutes away

Cesar had told this section in an interview last week that he was not able to see the boy when he was shooting for the movie "The Great Raid" in Queensland because the location site was far from Melbourne where he said Teresa and their son lived.

FILE PHOTO

LOYZAGA. Soon a Quantas flight attendant

"If he wanted to see my son, he could have done so when he and Sunshine (Cruz, Cesar's actress wife) had a concert in Sydney last year," Teresa said. "The concert (venue) was just 40 minutes away from my house."

She said Cesar had also bumped into a mutual friend, Ahl Diroy, at the Philippine Consulate in Sydney, and could have contacted Carlos Diego through him.

"He knows Ahl is my best friend," said Teresa. "So the best way to find his son is simply to ask Ahl. Ahl told him (Cesar) *malaki na si* Diego *at madalas niya kaming makasama*."

Cesar could also have looked up their phone number in the telephone directory in Sydney, Teresa said.

"We're listed under Loyzaga," she said.

In his dad's image

Teresa said she had bumped into Cesar's son Angelo and his brother Rommel when she went to ABS-CBN last week for a taping for the game show "Game Ka Na Ba?"

"I gave them a picture of Diego," she said. "When Angelo saw the picture, he said, '*Kamukhang-kamukha ni* Dad.' Then he went up to the studio to give the picture to Cesar."

Angelo and Rommel later came back and asked to see all the pictures of Diego, according to Teresa.

"I willingly showed them all of my son's pictures," she said. "I even told Rommel that Diego had been asking if I had already seen his dad and if I called him up already. I said, I didn't know his dad's number and that he's so busy because he's always working."

Teresa has been living in Sydney since May 2000 with Carlos Diego and her other son Joseph, 15, by her former husband, businessman Arnold Dizon.

She said she is also friends with Cesar's wife Sunshine, but she added that they are "not the best of friends, like we make *chika* every day."

But she said that when they have the chance, she and Sunshine would talk about their children and show their pictures to each other.

Before they left for Australia, Cesar and Sunshine would pick up Diego for the day, according to Teresa.

"They would spend the day together at Megamall and eat at Pancake House and we would all meet at Whistle Stop on Timog Avenue so I could fetch Diego," Teresa said.

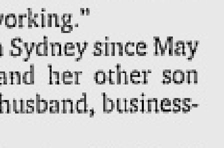
Teresa's older brother, basketball player Chito Loyzaga, also told INQUIRER Entertainment yesterday that Cesar would always be welcomed by the Loyzagas if he wanted to see Diego.

"With all the money he makes," said Chito, "I'm sure he can buy a ticket to Australia and

TERESA/ A30

Donna Villa: Let's save the industry

DOLLY WOOD



Dolly Ann Carvajal

COUPLE Carlo Caparas and Donna Villa are are very proud of their latest *obra maestra*, "Chavit (The Chavit Singson Story)." They remain undaunted by their detractors' claims that the true-to-life stories they make into movies only aim to shock and arouse controversy.

Direk Carlo sighed, "The sad part is that some people judge my work even before they see it entirely. It's the usual crab mentality."

Donna lamented, "The show biz industry is dying and we should all do what we can to save it. It can't be done if *tayo-tayo, eh, nagsisiraan*. Producers used to make a couple of movies per year. Nowadays producers like me have no choice but to shoot one or two movies a year because of the bad state of the industry."

Be that as it may, they refuse to be turned into pessimists. They have high hopes for "Chavit."

"It's not a political campaign," Carlo said. "We didn't touch on the impeachment trial.

DONNA/ A30

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Ma. Teresa I. Ang
Cavite
SOUTH LUZON 2
Rosemarie Labatete
Quezon
EAST VISAYAS
Arlene Pescador
Cebu
WEST VISAYAS
Ma. Corazon Oliva
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NORTH MINDANAO
Orlando Hodalgo
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Davao City

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SOUTH MINDANAO, Christopher Buenafe

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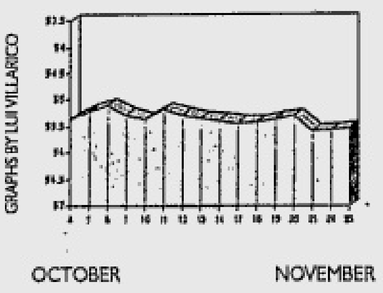

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STOCK MARKET

PSE to tighten audit of brokers

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange plans to tighten the independent auditing system on its 134 active member stockbrokerages after uncovering alleged anomalies by Asian Capital Equities Inc. (ACE).

PSE president Ernest Leung told reporters that while stockbrokers were already mandated by the securities law to engage the services of independent auditors, the exchange itself lacked an accreditation system for these auditors.

"If they (auditors) do their work, they'll make our own (regulatory) work easier," Leung said.

"When the PSE goes on audit, we don't substitute it for the audit of external auditors. We do it because we have to as an SRO (self-regulatory organization)," he said.

As an SRO, the PSE has the power to police its own ranks.

He said the PSE, at its own board level, could pass a resolution to put in place such an accreditation system for auditors of stockbrokerages, similar to the system used by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas on the auditors of banks.

Those brokers who might complain that they could not afford the services of the accredited auditors, Leung said, should consider merging or consolidating with other brokers to strengthen their operations.

Unlike the banking system which was bound by the secrecy law, Leung said the PSE technically had more leeway in auditing stockbrokerages to protect investors' interest.

"Confidentiality will still be respected but when you enter a business that uses funds by other people, that confidentiality has to be bound by limitations," he said.

In the case of ACE, which was already slapped with a cease-and-desist order from the Securities and Exchange Commission, the PSE uncovered certain fraudulent transactions as well as other violations of the Securities Regulation Code.

Sources said the PSE discovered that ACE, which lacked liquid assets, was using client's funds and shares of stocks for its own dealer accounts. Some of ACE's clients had aired their complaints to the PSE after the news on the CDO broke out.

Doris C. Dumlao

By Clarissa S. Batino

STRONG farm output and higher government spending have spurred the economy to grow at a pace that likely exceeded the 4.3-percent target for the third quarter, according to Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

"There is a strong possibility that we could exceed the target of 3.8 to 4.3 percent. We are getting very good indications largely because of the recovery of the agriculture sector," said Neri, who is also director-general of the National Economic and Development Authority.

The Neda estimated that GDP, or the total output of the domestic economy, must grow between 3.8 and 4.3 percent in the third quarter for the government to meet its economic growth target of 4.2 percent this year.

The government would announce today the third-quarter GDP figures. Neri said the second-quarter growth was revised as the government had understated some of the numbers.

"We would also be announcing a higher second-quarter growth (figure)," the Neda chief said.

Poor performance of the farm sector due to the El Niño weather disturbance dragged the second-quarter GDP growth to only 3.2 percent against the target of 3.7 to 4.4 percent. As a result, the government had to scrap its most optimistic growth scenario of a 5.2-percent GDP growth this year.

Fortunately, agriculture bounced back in the third quarter with a growth of 5.9 percent following a 13.2-percent improvement in palay production.

"Added to the recovery of the farm sector is the increased government spending that helped fuel growth. Other sectors are stable if not better like services and manufacturing. We are hoping that construction would not drag down the figures," Neri said.

He said the estimated improvement in the economy in the third quarter of more than 4 percent would allow the government to meet the low end of its 4.2 to 5.2 percent GDP growth goal this year.

The Neda chief said higher state spending in the third quarter had propelled growth in public construction and consumption. Government spending accounts for about 10 percent of GDP.

From July to September, the government spent more than the target and this pushed the budget deficit above the monthly ceilings. In August and September, expenditures exceeded their goals by about P10 billion each month.

Meeting the GDP target is also crucial in hitting the budget deficit ceiling of P202 billion this year. A percentage point drop in the GDP against the target would reduce revenue collection by about P5 billion.

Next year, Neri said the higher spending as a result of the elections could push the GDP growth up by about a percentage point against a forecast of 4.9 to 5.8 percent.

Moody's eyes downgrade of 7 local banks

MOODY'S Investors Service has placed on review the foreign currency long-term deposit ratings of the seven Philippine banks for possible downgrade.

In a report from Singapore, Moody's identified the banks as Banco de Oro Universal Bank, Bank of the Philippine Islands, Development Bank of the Philippines, Equitable-PCI Bank, Land Bank of the Philippines, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., and Philippine National Bank.

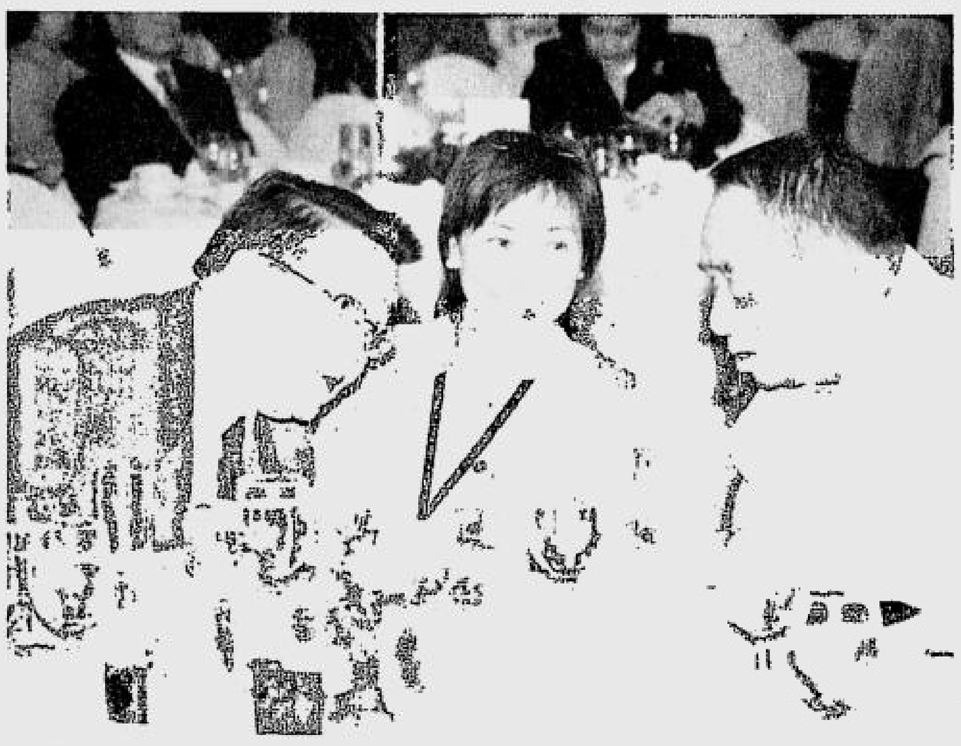
It said the Not-Prime short-term deposit and the bank financial strength ratings of all seven banks were unaffected.

Moody's also placed on review for possible downgrade the long-term local currency deposit ratings of DBP and PNB.

It said all the ratings of Allied Bank, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. and United Coconut Planters Bank were unaffected.

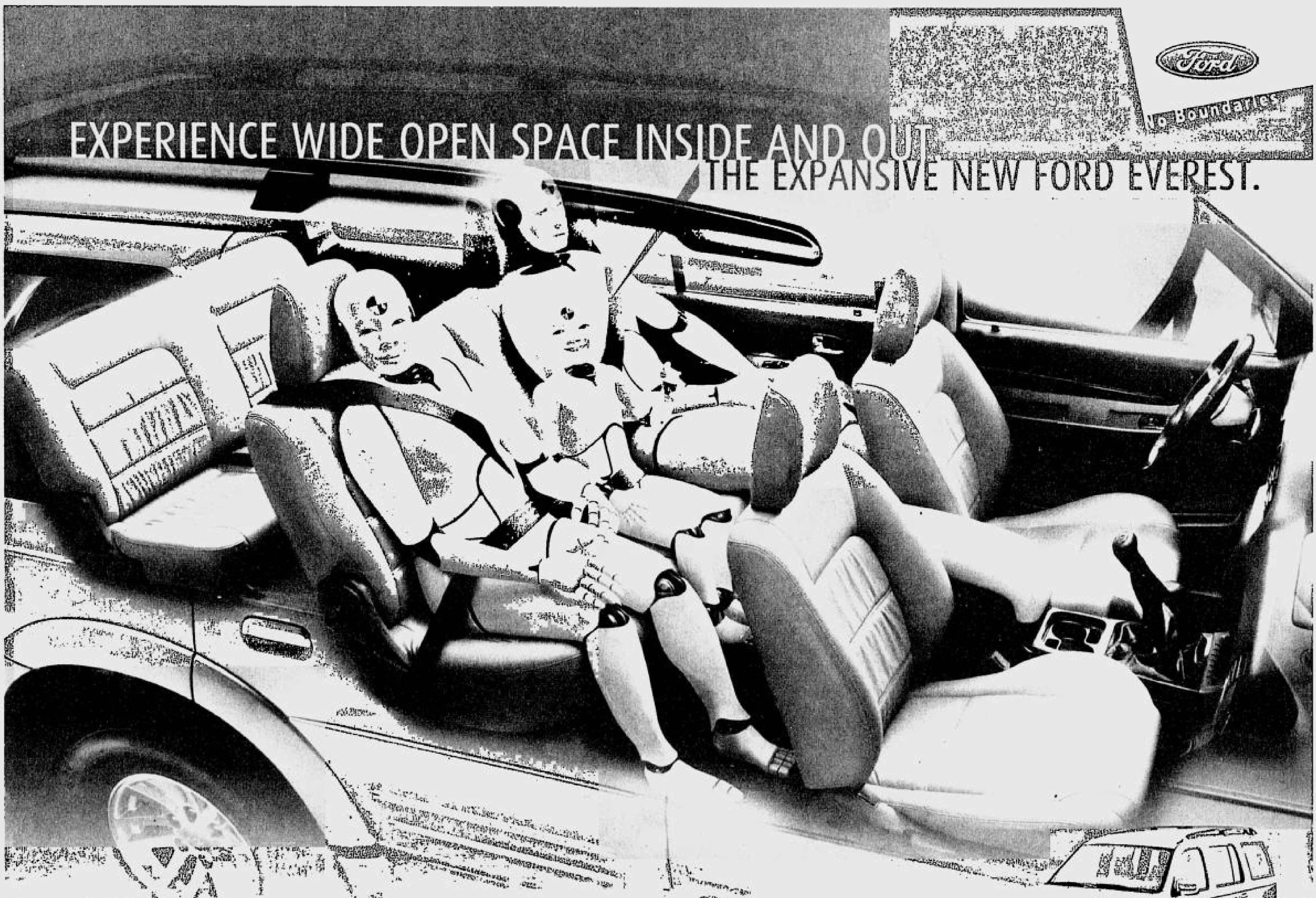
The actions followed Moody's review of the Philippines' long-term foreign and local cur-

MOODY'S/ B3



RAUL Concepcion of Concepcion Industries and Henry Sy of SM, huddle with Carrie Lim, wife of Sammie Lim, chair of the ongoing 29th Philippine Business Conference Expo at the Manila Hotel.

ROGER MARGALLO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Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants

MESSAGES

MY most cordial greetings to the officers and members of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA) on the occasion of your 57th Annual National Convention.

I commend your organization for its meritorious effort in advancing the accounting profession. Though the years, events like this have become not just a venue for updating your members on recent developments and trends in the field of accounting but also an opportunity to gather their energies around the common task of nation-building.

Your invaluable participation in the government's efforts to bolster investments; create employment opportunities; and promote a more dynamic business environment in this age of modernization will ensure the steady economic growth of our country in the coming years.

I congratulate your for another year of laudable service to the Filipino nation

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines

WARM greetings to the members of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants on your 57th Annual National Convention.

Your theme for this year's convention "Picpa Partner for Progres" finds greater significance in light of our efforts to help the struggling Philippine economy.

Our country's journey towards progress and development must be coupled with honesty and truth. It is time that we have professionals who will be true to their words and honest with their ways.

Honesty and truth will strengthen us as a people. It will nurture trust and will build a strong foundation for unity and cooperation.

As you endeavor to be significant partner for progress, rest assured that I am one with you.

May pag-asa pa.

Raul S. Roco
RAUL S. ROCO

THE PROFESSIONAL Regulation Commission (PRC) extends its warmest congratulations to the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA) on the occasion of its 57th Annual National Convention.

The occasion once again exhibits PICPA's firm determination to promote professional excellence among its ranks. The Convention's theme, "PICPA: Partner for Progress," speaks well of how the Institute has become a dependable and reliable partner in the country's quest for progress and development. Indeed, the PICPA Annual National Convention has been marked with earnest dedication to update the members on the latest developments in the profession.

Through the years, PICPA has been working closely with the Commission in all its efforts to push the profession to the zenith of professional excellence. Recently, this collaboration was boosted with the country's adoption of the International Accounting Standards (IAS) and International Standards on Auditing (ISA). As the national organization and the accredited professional organization for Filipino CPAs, the Commission has high hopes that through these standards, PICPA will remain steadfast in its partnership with the Commission in promoting high professional standards.

Rest assured, the Commission will always be one with PICPA in nurturing Filipino CPAs toward professional excellence through a customer-focused, technology-propelled, vibrant, and dynamic professional regulation.

More power and Mabuhay!

Hon. Antonieta Fortuna-Ibe
Chairperson
Profesisonal Regulation Commission

ON behalf of the Board of Accountancy, I wish to convey our sincerest greetings and felicitations to the officers and members of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA) on the occasion of your Annual Convention to be held on November 26 to 29 , 2003 at the Albay Astrodome, Legaspi City.

Once again you are gathered to renew your ties and commitment to your responsibilities as financial and business advisors. This year's theme "PICPA: Partner for Progress" appropriately underscores the need for oneness of vision and constructive efforts by all sectors of our profession, apart from being continuously kept abreast with the technological advances and international business developments to be more effective and responsive to the needs of our constituents. Everyone must do his share if we are to succeed in maintaining the public confidence in our profession. This gathering is another wonderful opportunity for all of you to renew your dedication and seek ways to improve your professional services because you are always expected to exert uncompromising efforts in the pursuit of professional excellence in the performance of your work. May you always pursue what is right with compassion and dedication with a strong sense of morality, independence, and integrity.

Please accept my best wishes for a fruitful and fulfilling convention.

Hon. Eugene T. Mateo
Chairman
Board of Accountancy

IT IS MY greatest honor to welcome all of you, PICPAns, delegates and participants to our 57th Annual National Convention. Bringing the ANC to the Bicol Region for the first time in the history of PICPA should elate all Bicolanos, for it gives us pride to show off the majestic splendor of Mayon Volcano and the opportunity to share the warmth and hospitality that Bicolanos are known for.

To meet the expectations of participants and guests, we have gathered the best in the profession to enhance our body of knowledge during the two-day technical sessions. And the speakers were selected based on their expertise on chosen topics relevant to the profession nowadays. The Convention aims to give only the best to the Accounting Profession and to all attendees, professional and non-professional as well.

The Convention is PICPA's culminating activity that celebrates achievements during the year and assesses what remains to be done by the Incoming Administration. It is an annual event that brings together all CPAs to interact on issues and concerns of the profession, not only in terms of exchange of technical knowledge but also fellowship with fun and frolics.

My commendations to the Officers and Members of PICPA, particularly the 57th Annual National Committee headed by Dr. Rufo Mendoza. No doubt, this convention will be a great success!

Mabuhay ang PICPA!
Dios Mabalos!

Dean Crisanto F. Castro, Jr.
PICPA National President

IT IS A DISTINCT pride and honor to welcome every CPA and guest attending the 57th Annual National Convention (ANC) of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants in the historic city of Legazpi, Albay Province.

This year's convention is a showcase of non-traditional events insofar as PICPA conventions are concerned. To be hosted for the first time by a region—the Southern Luzon-Bicol Region—ANC will adopt an unconventional technical session on "People at Work, Live!" which features the human aspect of the working professionals, where in this particular session, non-CPAs are also invited to attend.

Over and above the technical sessions are events where one can win new acquaintances and friends, learn lessons for himself, and find opportunities to become a contributory actor to the society. The host Region, despite the geographical distance that separates the chapters comprising it, has devoted so much time and energy to make this affair successful.

We hope that every delegate will find meaning in this convention. We also hope that each participant will find the distinct and natural beauty of the Bicol Region a welcome respite from his everyday life and will enjoy its exotic cuisine and delicacies.

Welcome and Mabuhay!

Dr. Rufo R. Mendoza
Chair
57th Annual National Convention

ON behalf of the Southern Luzon Region, I welcome you all to the 57th PICPA Annual National Convention as host region - committee chair, in this scenic place of Bicol. To the participants and guets, our International Affiliates from California, we hope that you find the convention programme useful and relevant to your affiliation, whether you are with public practice, commerce and industry, education or government.

The year's theme "PICPA: Partner for Progress" ushers the role of every CPA in nation building, a catalysts for change, for good governance and breast with the technology ever changing to fast track progress.

Let this gathering be a respite from the daily grinds we have, the interesting topics for the technical sessions, the fun-filled evening for the regional presentation as well as interactions with new friends and renew acquaintances. We hope that you enjoy the sights, food and products of Bicol.

MABUHAY!

Ms. Emmie M. Mendoza
PICPA Regional Director
Southern Luzon Region

57th Annual National Convention

Convention Highlights

Nov. 26 to 29, 2003, Legazpi City, Albay

Wednesday, November 26

7:30 am Motorcade
8:30 am Courtesy Call to Governor and Mayor
9:00 am 5:00 pm Annual Planning Conference (Venue: Albay Hotel)
10:00 am Opening of Fair and Exhibits (Venue: Albay Astrodome, Legazpi City)
1:00 pm Sportfest (Venue: Divine Word of Legazpi Gym, Legazpi City)
6:00 pm Reunion of PICPA National Officers and Directors (Venue: Governor's Guest House, Legazpi City)

Thusday, November 27

8:00 am Eucharistic Celebration (Venue: Albay Astrodome, Legazpi City)
9:00 amOpening Ceremonies (Venue: Albay Astrodome, Legazpi City)
Keynote Speaker: Hon. Raul S. Roco (Former Senator, Republic of the Philippines)
12:00 noon Luncheon Meeting (Guest Speaker: Hon. Guillermo N.Carague)

1:00 pm - 6:00 pm TECHNICAL SESSION 1
(People at Work Live! Seminar Series)
Topic: "Discovering and Developing your Passion in Life"
Speaker: Ms. Regina Galang Reyes (Editor, People at Work, Philippine Daily Inquirer)
Topic:"Getting Ahead to Work without Leaving your Family Behind"
Speaker: Ms. An Mercado Alcantara (Executive Editor, ABS-CBN Publishing, Inc.)
Topic:"Creativity for Continuous Competitiveness"
Speaker: Ms. Teresa Reyes Tunay (Editor, Blue Collar Magazine)

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm Educator's Forum (Venue: People's Hall, Capitol Building, Legazpi City)
Topic:"Issues and Concerns that Affect the Accounting Profession"
Speakers: Atty. Eugene T. Mateo (Chairman, Board of Accountancy)
Mr. David L. Balangue (Chairman, Interpretation Committee, ASC)
Atty. Abelardo T. Domondon (Chairman, Legislation and By-Laws)
Dean Ester F. Ledesma (Chair, PICPA Education Sector)
Moderators: Dr. Gloria T. Baysa (Vice-Chair, Education Sectoral Council)
Dr. Raul C. Addatu (Adviser, ACPAE)
Prof. Ging M. Ireneo (3rd Vice President, ACPAE)
6:00 pm Governor's Night
7:00 pm Awards Night

Friday, November 28

8:30 am TECHNICAL SESSION 2
Topic:"Accounting.Net (e Procurement)"
Speakers: Hon. Emilia T. Boncodin (Secretary, Department of Budget and Management)
Ms. Carol E. Carreon (Vice-Chair, Bayan Trade Dtocom, Inc.)
Reactors: Ms. Lourdes M. Castillo (Director IV, National Government Sector, Cluster III, Local Government & Security, COA)
Mr. Winston A. Chan (Partner, SGV & Co.)
Ms. Corazon S. Hernandez (Director, Information Technology, Alba, Romeo & Co.)

10:30 am TECHNICAL SESSION 3
Topic:"Financial Instruments (IAS 32 and 39)"
Speakers: Mr. Juan T. Imperial (Foreign Exchange Trader)
Mr. Wilson P. Tan (Partner, SGV & Co.)
Reactors: Dr. Gloria T. Baysa (Vice President for Finance, Polytechnic University of the Philippines)
Atty. Rosario S. Bernaldo (Managing Partner, R.S. Bernaldo & Associates)
Mr. Alfredo B. Parungao (Chief Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Philippine National Oil Company)
12:00 noon Luncheon Meeting
Speakers: **Dr. Jaime C. Laya, President, Association of Certified Public Accountants in Public Practice and Hon. Joey L. Salceda Representative, Province of Albay**

1:00 pm TECHNICAL SESSION 4
Topic:"Raising the Bar of Excellence for a Better Philippines"
Speakers: Mr. Sonny B. Coloma (Professor, Asian Institute of Management)
Mr. Antonio M. Bernardo, (Commissioner, Bureau of Customs)
Mr. Edward I. Fereira (President, Management Association of the Philippines)
Moderator: Atty. Oscar M. Orbos (Former Governor, Province of Pangasinan)
3:00 pm Annual Business Meeting
4:00 pm Closing Plenary Session
6:00 pm Mayor's Night
7:00 pm Chapter/Regional Presentations

Saturday, November 29
City/Provincial Tours

LUNCHEON SPEAKERS

Hon. Guillermo N. Carague
Chairman, Commission on Audit

Dr. Jaime C. Laya
President
Association of Certified Public Accountants in Public Practice

Hon. Joey L. Salceda
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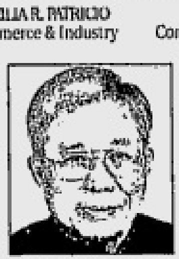

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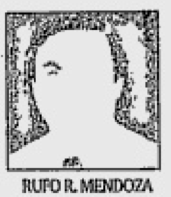

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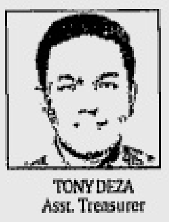

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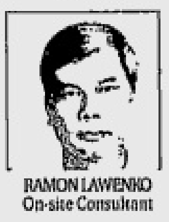

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CLARK Development Corp. and the Bureau of Customs signed a reiterating agreement recently to strictly enforce the anti-smuggling campaign inside the Clark Special Economic Zone (CSEZ). CDC president Emmanuel Angeles (seated 2nd from right) signs agreement with BoC Clark Collector Marietta Zamoranos (seated 3rd from right). Also in photo are (seated) CDC chair Rizalino Navarro (1st from left) and CDC executive vice president Victor Jose Luciano.

Moody's eyes downgrade . . .

From page B1

rency country ratings—the Ba1 foreign currency long-term debt, Ba2 foreign currency bank deposits and Baa3 local currency bond—because of heightened political uncertainties, which have begun to have adverse consequences for the government's financial position and the overall economy.

The following ratings were placed on review for possible downgrade: Banco de Oro, senior debt rating of Ba2, and long-term deposit rating of Ba2; BPI, long-term deposit rating of Ba2; DBP, long-term deposit rating of Ba2, local currency long-term deposit rating of Baa3, and local currency short-term deposit rating of Prime-3; Equitable-PCI, subordinated debt rating of Ba1, and long-term deposit rating of Ba2; Land Bank, long-term deposit rating of Ba2; Metrobank, subordinated debt rating of Ba1, and long-term deposit rating of Ba2; PNB, senior debt rating of Ba1, long-term deposit rating of Ba2, local currency long-term deposit rating of Baa3, and local currency short-term deposit rating of Prime-3. *Reuters*

DTI to seek 50% tariff cut on imported chicken

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry will recommend a 50-percent reduction in the tariff on imported chicken to encourage importation and address the expected rise in demand during the yuletide.

Trade and Industry Undersecretary for Consumer Welfare Adrian Cristobal said the DTI would propose to the Cabinet-level Trade and Related Matters Committee that the tariff on imported chicken be cut from the current 40 percent to 20 percent.

He said, however, that the lower tariff would be recommended to be in effect only during the month of December, and would be enjoyed only by importers licensed by the Bureau of Animal Industries.

The lower tariff, Cristobal added, would be applicable to a maximum of 1,000 metric tons of additional chicken imports, and that the country would import these from Australia, Thailand and the United States.

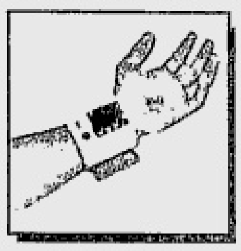
"There has been a consensus (among industry players) that there will be tightness in supply of about one to 2 million kilos of chicken," he told reporters after a meeting with local chicken suppliers and representatives of a supermarket association held Tuesday night.

Cristobal said the country's chicken suppliers have already committed to increase production by 1.3 million more chicken for next month, but that the volume would still be insufficient to meet the expected demand surge.

The plan to import more chicken is also seen as a move to stabilize poultry prices after the National Price Coordinating Council of the DTI reported that the price went up to P95 a kilo early this month from only P85 in September.

"We do not want the consumers to bear the burden of this lack of supply of chicken," Roxas earlier said.

Philippine Associaton of Supermarkets Inc. president Frederick Ples said, however, that retail outlets have pledged not to undertake anymore price increases and that they would try to stabilize the price at the previous level of P85.



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Perez pushes Panay power project

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ENERGY Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. yesterday pushed for the construction of a 100-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Iloilo amid strong opposition from local environmentalists.

In a statement, Perez said the proposed power plant would use clean coal technology to ensure the lowest impact on the environment.

The local unit of Korea Electric Power Corp. (Kepco) has committed to do the $150-million project when President Macapagal-Arroyo visited Seoul earlier this year.

"The power plant would adopt the latest circulating fluidized bed (CFB) boiler design and modern technology," Perez said.

He explained that CFB technology burns a mixture of coal and limestone at a low temperature, which "prevents environmental pollution."

The low temperature reduces nitrogen oxide emissions to safe levels while the limestone burned with coal would capture sulfur oxide emissions, he added.

Perez said that even advanced countries like the United States and Germany, where environmental standards are more rigid, get more than 50 percent of their electricity supply from coal-fired generators.

"We have to strike a balance between sustainability and stability. Panay Island is in dire need of additional supply come 2004," he warned.

Perez said coal, being one of the most cost effective fuel, would help answer the need for more power plants in Panay.

He added that proponents of coal-fired power plants in the country have been following the lead of more advance countries in putting up control facilities both for air and water.

"Health, safety and environment are things that the energy sector cannot compromise," Perez said.

The official cited a World Wide Fund study which found that the CFB technology had lower carbon dioxide emissions than even gas turbine-based generators.

In an earlier statement, Perez said the government has stepped up efforts to ensure that a looming power shortage in the Cebu-Negros-Panay grid would be averted during the holiday season.

Records from the Department of Energy showed that the four-province island had a dependable generating capacity of 73 MW, but that demand was hitting as high as 125 MW, which means a shortage of 52 MW.

Borrowings to trim BOP deficit to $600M

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas is expecting the country's balance-of-payments deficit this year to drop to $600 million by year's end against a target of $1.15 billion due to the substantial dollar inflow from $1.8 billion in government borrowings during the last two months.

As a result of the heavy borrowings, the BOP posted a surplus of $942 million in October, reversing the BOP deficit of $783 million in the first nine months to a surplus of $159 million during the 10-month period.

"Because of the government's pre-funding, there could be a 50-percent decline in the BOP deficit this year against what we had programmed," said BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the government would settle a substantial amount of maturing obligations in December and this would make a dent on the dollar stock.

"But I think we could still end the year with reserves of about $16 billion," he said.

Closely watched by investors, the BOP indicates the country's ability to settle its obligations and is influenced by two items. One is the current account that reflects movement in trade and the other is the capital and financial account that mirrors the flow of investment and borrowings.

A BOP deficit means there are more dollar outflow than inflow as a result of trade, investment and borrowings. A strong payments position helps stabilize the local currency as it staves off demand for dollars.

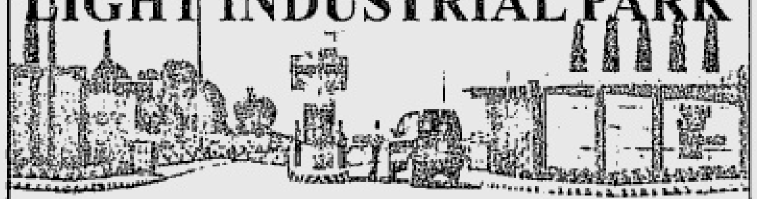
In October, the central bank borrowed $500 million in three-year funds while the national government floated $1.05 billion worth of 10- and 22-year bonds. This month, the government sold $250 million worth of three-year bonds.

Tetangco said the loan and bond proceeds had offset the slowdown in export receipts this year.

The BSP had revised in September the export growth target in 2003 to only 3 percent from an original 5 percent. But dollar inflow from shipments of local products overseas had remained lackluster as of September.

The deputy governor said that even with the lower export growth, the BSP would no longer revise its adjusted current account target of a $1.7-billion surplus this year.

In 2004, the BSP's new forecast was for the BOP to hit a surplus of $1.7 billion and the current account surplus to drop to $1.1 billion although Tetangco said the numbers would still be reviewed by year's end.



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Strong US GDP data excite Asia

SINGAPORE—A big boost to US growth lit a fire under Asian exporter stocks on Wednesday and the dollar strengthened against the yen, as investors welcomed evidence demand was healthy in the world's biggest consumer market.

Japan's Nikkei average rose 1.85 percent, led by Honda Motor Co., which jumped 2.13 percent, and other auto stocks after the surprisingly strong US economic data. South Korea's Hyundai Motor, which exports more than half of its sales, gained 5.63 percent.

European markets, having already reacted to the GDP numbers, were seen trading cautiously ahead of a busy day for US economic data.

Jobless claims, durable goods orders, personal income spending data, consumer sentiment and the closely watched Chicago-area manufacturing reports are all due on Wednesday.

A widely watched MSCI index of non-Japan Asia markets had risen 0.55 percent, led by a 1.89 percent gain for South Korea's Kospi and a 1.71-percent jump on Singapore's Straits Times index.

Japanese banks, led by a 4. 47-percent gain on Mizuho Financial Group shares, rose after results on Tuesday showed a return to profit in the first half thanks to higher stock prices, a tax windfall and progress in bad loan disposals.

US stock markets ended little changed despite the gross domestic product (GDP) data, which showed the economy grew at an 8.2-percent annualized rate in the third quarter, the strongest advance in almost two decades.

The dollar was broadly steady as the GDP figures offset worries about tensions in the Middle East and the ballooning US current account deficit.

It was barely changed against the Japanese unit at 109.52 yen. The euro was a touch higher from New York levels at $1.1798 and 129.19 yen.

Japanese government bond (JGB) prices were pressured by the Nikkei stock average's rise, as investors viewed that strong interim bank results made it more likely that share prices would rise and investors would neglect bonds.

December JGB futures ended down 0.19 points at 138.09 and the benchmark 255th 10-year cash bond was yielding 1.30 percent, up a quarter of one basis point from Tuesday.

US Treasuries finished the Asian day not far from where they settled in New York, where portfolio adjustment helped put a floor under prices. The 10-year note yield rose as high as 4.21 percent in Tokyo before finishing one basis point above the US closing level of 4.18 percent.

Australian shares traded flat as negative earnings pressure for exporters from the robust Australian dollar canceled out the upbeat US growth figures. *Reuters*

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A MAN looks at an electric quotation board flashing the key Nikkei index of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in front of a securities company in downtown Tokyo. Japanese share prices closed up 1.85 percent Wednesday as strong US economic growth data boosted prospects for Japan's export-led recovery. The Nikkei-225 index of the stock exchange gained 184.63 points to 10,144.83. AFP

Japan revs up car sales

TOKYO—Japan's top three automakers said Wednesday their global production in October rose sharply, driven by steady demand at home and abroad.

Worldwide production by Japan's biggest carmaker Toyota Motor increased 10 percent year on year to 594,681 units while output by No. 2 Nissan Motor jumped 13.1 percent to 284,776 in October.

"Our production rose in all regions," a spokesperson for Toyota said.

"In particular, output in South Africa, Australia and North America grew sharply," she said, adding the October rise marked the 22nd consecutive month of year-on-year increases.

Nissan, controlled by Renault SA of France, said the start of operations at a plant in Mississippi helped boost overall global production.

"The US plant makes popular minivans and pick-up trucks, supporting our worldwide output," said a Nissan spokesperson.

Honda's global production grew 6.8 percent to 269,153 in October thanks to robust production in Asia.

"Our production in Asia, particularly in China and Thailand, underpinned total global output," said a spokesperson at Honda, the nation's third-largest carmaker.

The company also said its production in the United States hit 10 million units, becoming the first Japanese automaker to clear the hurdle in the world's biggest automobile market.

Honda began car production in the United States in 1982.

Toyota's domestic sales in October edged up 0.1 percent to 149,846 from a year earlier while Nissan sold 55,718 units, up 3.8 percent.

Honda's domestic sales rose 4.1 percent to 66,127 units. *AFP*

Singapore output up in Oct.

SINGAPORE—Singapore's manufacturing output grew a better-than-expected 19.3 percent in October from a year ago on the back of the key electronics sector and pharmaceuticals, the government said Wednesday.

The figures are further evidence of the city-state's fledgling recovery from the economic slump that reached its depths during the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome crisis in the first half of this year, analysts said.

The outcome beat analyst forecasts of between 8.3 and 11.2 percent and was up sharply from the 6.2 percent expansion in September and 10.6 percent in August, the Economic Development Board said.

Growth for October was up 16.3 percent on a monthly basis. Manufacturing output expanded 14.8 percent in the 10 months to October.

"The growth (in October) was contributed largely by the biomedical sciences and electronics clusters," the EDB said in a statement.

Biomedical sciences output soared 151 percent from a year ago, powered by a 209 percent gain in the production of pharmaceuticals.

The electronics cluster rose 12.7 percent on the year, with production in semiconductors climbing 30.8 percent. However, output of computer peripherals fell 11.4 percent.

Demand in the lead-up to the Christmas holidays drove production levels for information and communications products, and consumer electronics, which grew 1.6 percent, compared with a contraction of 16.8 percent in September and 18.4 percent in August.

The chemicals cluster, which covers refined petroleum, petrochemicals and specialty chemicals, expanded 4.4 percent after an 8.6-percent rise in September.

Precision engineering, which includes machinery and systems, climbed 0.4 percent. *AFP*

Moody's upgrades Thailand

BANGKOK—Ratings agency Moody's Investors Service raised Thailand's foreign currency ratings by two notches on Wednesday, citing the country's growing ability to meet its external debt payments and strong growth prospects.

The upgrade, expected to further boost investor confidence in one of Asia's fastest growing economies, puts Thailand's foreign currency debt rating on the same level as neighboring Malaysia and just below South Korea.

The news helped push the benchmark Stock Exchange of Thailand index up 1.6 percent to 614.55 points after eight straight days of falls, while yields across the government bond yield curve dropped two to five basis points.

"Thailand's external payments position has improved markedly in the years since the 1997 financial crisis, and the country's vulnerability to external shocks has been significantly reduced," Moody's said in a statement.

"Total and short-term debt has been slashed and official reserves have been built up to an historically high level."

Thailand, where the economy is expected to grow at least 6 percent this year after a 5.3-percent growth in 2002, has seen its external debt drop to around 40 percent of GDP this year from 59 percent in 2001, according to Merrill Lynch Phatra.

Moody's raised the rating for Thailand's long-term foreign currency bonds and foreign currency country ceiling to Baa1 from Baa3.

It raised the ceiling for foreign currency bank deposits to Baa1 from Ba1 and foreign currency ceilings for short-term notes and deposits to Prime-2 from Not-Prime and said the outlook on the foreign currency ceilings and ratings was stable meaning another move was not imminent.

Economists said the upgrade only confirmed what was already known about one of Asia's star economic performers.

"Thailand has a strong fiscal position, they have repaid the IMF loan early, growth is still very strong," said Joseph Tan, regional economist at Standard Chartered Bank. *Reuters*

South Korea's Woori eyes card unit rescue plan

SEOUL—Woori Financial said on Wednesday it was considering a rescue plan for its credit card unit that could include a share issue to raise cash as data showed a record number of South Koreans were behind on their debt repayments.

Woori Financial Group, the country's third largest financial services group, said it would hold a board meeting on Friday to discuss ways to rescue Woori Card Co., which has the highest proportion of customers behind on their payments in the industry.

"We will have a board meeting on Friday to talk about steps we can take to improve the health of Woori Card which will include a merger or an additional rights offering," said a spokesperson for Woori Financial.

Overdue loans at Woori Card stood at 967 billion won ($809 million) at the end of August, 18.1 percent of its credit card loans, against an industry average of 11 percent.

Woori Financial has already injected 840 billion won in fresh capital into its wholly owned card unit this year, but has said it would need to raise additional cash by early next year.

Woori has been seeking to sell up to 49.9 percent in Woori Card to GE Capital Corp., but no progress has been made.

The move comes days after Korea Exchange Bank said it planned a $140-million takeover of its card affiliate KEB Credit Service Co. and top card firm LG Card Co. was granted $1.7 billion in emergency loans, saving it from default.

The card industry is struggling to cope with the aftermath of a credit boom that has left consumers unable to repay loans.

Bank industry figures showed on Wednesday the number of South Koreans classified as credit delinquents hit a record high of 3.6 million in October—one in every 10 South Koreans over the age of 15. This includes those behind on other types of loans. *Reuters*

US Fed prepares to end low rate vow

WASHINGTON—Federal Reserve officials have laid the groundwork to jettison an unusual vow to keep interest rates low, but whether they will take that step at their next meeting is far from clear, Fed watchers say.

After each of its last three policy meetings, the Fed has said it expected to keep rates low for "a considerable period," a surprisingly explicit, if still ambiguous, commitment from a central bank historically loath to tie its hands in any way.

The pledge first surfaced when Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan testified to Congress in July, as policymakers worried that long-term interest rates might rise before the economy had fully found its feet.

Having cut overnight rates to a 1958 low of one percent in late June, the Fed's regular ammunition against economic weakness was running out and officials were worried a slowing rate of inflation was raising the risk of falling prices.

But some Fed officials were never comfortable with a pledge that appeared to put a time frame on interest-rate action, as minutes of a mid-September Fed meeting made clear.

"Members generally agreed that the (Fed) should not usually commit itself to a particular policy stance over some preestablished, extended time frame," the minutes said.

At that meeting, a decision was made to retain the statement out of concern its abandonment might suggest a sharp shift in policymakers' views on the economy.

"I think that you can tell by the body language among Fed officials that they would like to find a way to ease their way out of that particular reference," said David Rosenberg, chief North American economist at Merrill Lynch.

"The real question is what to replace it with," he said, adding that the timing of any shift in rhetoric was uncertain. *Reuters*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of November 25, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust dev. Bank Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	10,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.5	3,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	43.5	43.5	43	43.5	1,643,700
China Banking Corp.	665	665	665	665	3,840
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	34	35	34	35	29,900
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.59	1,060,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26.5	26	26	88,500
Philippine National Bank	24.25	24.25	24.25	24.25	1,000
Phil. Savings Bank	26	26	26	26	200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	16,800
Security Bank Corp.	17	17.5	17	17.5	4,400
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	26	26	1,300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	175	185	175	185	1,150
Manulife Financial Corp.	1690	1690	1690	1690	2,300
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1330	1330	1330	1330	3,000
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	26	27	26	27	12,100
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	150,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	750	760	750	755	287,870
ISM Communications Corp.	0.039	0.04	0.037	0.04	2,900,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	7,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.86	0.86	3,930,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	770	780	770	775	112,160
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	49,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.25	529,100
Manila Electric Co. B	22	22	21.75	22	1,321,400
Petron Corp.	2.04	2.14	2.04	2.14	11,664,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2	2	2	2	2,856,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	200,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	30,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	130,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	69,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	30	31	30	31	25,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	16.75	16.5	16.5	111,900
RFM Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	200,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	54.5	54.5	54.5	16,500
San Miguel Corp. B	61.5	61.5	61.5	61.5	13,900
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	200,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	10,000
Ayala Corp.	5	5	4.95	4.95	5,981,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	30,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	10,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	20,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.46	9,040,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.205	0.205	0.195	0.205	1,180,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	8,800,000
Dmci Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	500,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	18.25	18.75	18.25	18.75	692,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	1,000,000
Ionics Inc.	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	302,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	1,820,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	250,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	1,950,000
Music Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	400,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	200,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	300,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.58	1,030,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.38	0.43	0.38	0.43	1,830,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	26.5	27.5	26.5	27.5	67,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Q	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	300
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	3,857,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	60,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.115	0.115	0.115	0.115	50,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	1,710,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	2,339,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.22	2.22	2.22	2.22	50,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	560,000
SM Development Corp.	1.08	1.1	1.08	1.1	30,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	10,154,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	1,500,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	1,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	5,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	1,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	130,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	50,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	10,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	2,869,170	86,561,750.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	110,218,730	438,127,960.00
PRO	18,810,000	93,137,850.00
Mining	8,680,000	762,300.00
OIL	10,000,000	30,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	150,577,900	618,619,860.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	423.01	UP 0.40
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,002.92	UP 15.03
PRO	563.91	UP 5.04
Mining	1,625.61	DOWN 36.41
OIL	1.33	DOWN 0.03
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	837.24	UP 0.42
Composite	1,344.36	UP 9.78

NO. OF ADVANCES: 29; NO. OF DECLINES: 15; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 36; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 80; NO. OF TRADES: 1,515

CURRENCIES

November 26, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.849762067	1.000000	55.649000
Japan	Yen	0.007769	0.009143	0.508800
United Kingdom	Pound	1.441281	1.696100	94.386300
Hongkong	Dollar	0.109411	0.128755	7.165100
Switzerland	Franc	0.643467	0.757232	42.139200
Canada	Dollar	0.644687	0.758668	42.219100
Singapore	Dollar	0.493474	0.580720	32.316500
Australia	Dollar	0.611163	0.719217	40.023700
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.25407	2.652590	147.614000
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.226591	0.266652	14.838900
Brunei	Dollar	0.492045	0.579039	32.222900
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0001	0.000118	0.006600
Thailand	Baht	0.021314	0.025082	1.395800
United Arab Emirates	Dirham	0.231379	0.272287	15.152500
Euro	Euro	1	1.176800	65.487700
Argentina	Peso	0.294036	0.346021	19.255700
Brazil	REAL	0.292015	0.343643	19.123400
Denmark	Kroner	0.134465	0.158238	8.805800
India	Rupee	0.018558	0.021839	1.215300
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.223651	0.263193	14.646400
Mexico	New Peso	0.07532	0.088637	4.932600
New Zealand	Dollar	0.541975	0.637796	35.492700
Norway	Kroner	0.122568	0.144238	8.026709
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014908	0.017544	0.976300
South Africa	Rand	0.12934	0.152207	8.470200
Korea	Won	0.000705	0.000830	0.046200
Sweden	Kroner	0.111558	0.131282	7.305700
Syria	Pound	0.0165	0.019417	1.080500
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025	0.029420	1.637200
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000533	0.000627	0.034900

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BEST MAIDS 772-4213

Good-Maid-Yaya-Cook 853-3504

Help Agency 532-1947 • 532-8376

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Maid/Cook/Yaya 7329642

MAIDS W/NBI-REF. 9950535

MAIDS*ALABANG 8420119 Q.City 9268984/4331431

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L-BAHAY 9208784 4640520

L-BAHAY 712-16-92

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

HOUSEHOLD

LIPAT BAHAY

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•P600Trp 4153808/7001529

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

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MKT NR AYALA
BnowTwnhse/3stry/3br/2tb/grge P3.435M 8903461 loc 34

MANILA

ESPANA TOWER
nr UST 0917-8102903

NR LA SALLE
BnowTwnhse/3stry/3br/3tb/grge P3.295M 8903461 loc 34

1-2-3BR nr La Salle TAFT 894-4516 / 0917-9853661

MANDALUYONG

RUSH! CONDO 2br 3tb 1pkg ALONG EDSA 0918-5179690

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CUBAO 1.4M 10%DP 9132224

*CUBAO CONDO
No D/P Pagibig 09178102903

Rush! Fernandina 88 100sqm 4.5M Neg 3br 2tb 0916-7069277

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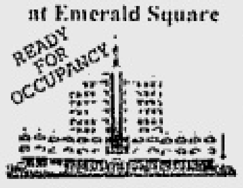
TOWER
at Emerald Square



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APT/CONDO W/GARAGE PACO MANILA TEL 563-6296

PASIG

AIC Gold 2brUnf 20T 4121825

APARTMENT

MANILA

Nr LA SALLE 9T 09195162077

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CUBAO P3.8 LADY 9124428

w/bus space 7.5T 3730584

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P'QUE P150 / 12hrs 827-5345

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★Vans Coaster Bus 422-9206

CARS, VAN T9273453

L300 ADV. 741-1356

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CARS FOR RENT

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STAREX 12 seater 7318549

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1.5% Fast Car Loan 3677523/24

1.5% CARLOAN 373-6519

1.5% CARLOAN 788-0357

1.5% CARLOAN 952-2510

1.5% Fast Car Loan 6560140

1.5% w/o Taking Car 6567685

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3650974/75

1.5% w/oTaking Car 3732081-82

•1HR Fast Car Loan 7125202•

2% w/o Taking Car 826-7840

2% w/o Taking Car 7262780

2% w/oTaking Car 8870490/95

2% w/oTaking Car 8966630/33

2% w/oTaking Car 8959454

2% w/oTaking Car 7221021

2% w/oTaking Car 7228942-43

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

BUY/SELL

EDUCATION PLANS 71377284

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Garage Sale Nov. 29 & 30 (Sat. & Sun.) 9:30AM #3 Ponce St., San Lorenzo Village Makati

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Dog Trainer 09192050952

23T New Compl SR Impld 7767507

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• DIR. HIRE • OFC MKTG STAFF 20-48YO COL. GRD/LVL W/ OR W/O EXP W/ SALRY MAYSEL 9352962•

DIRECT HIRE OFC MKTG STAFF 18-45yo w/w/o exp Coll grad/ugrad T-4387472 Ms Olga

Direct Hire Ofc Staff/Mktg 18-50 Hi-Salary Betty 4385743

OFC/MKTG STF 0920-3562010

WANTED: Accountant Computer Literate FINE FANCY Bldg B Basement SM Megamall

Wtd Masseuse 09197247287 MF

XRAYTECH/2916985/2772167

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that the Stock Certificates China Banking Corp. No. 11068-V, 7shares & First Metro Investment No. A-14491, 204shares of Ana G. Baro were Lost (PDI-Nov. 20, 27, Dec. 4, 2003)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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XMASLITES 3SETS/P100 Trees Ropelites Etc. 532-3909

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF MACO (COMPOSTELA VALLEY), INC.

1. Starting November 28, 2003, the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) thru its duly authorized representatives shall receive claims for insured deposits maintained with the closed Rural Bank of Maco (Compostela Valley), Inc.

2. Depositors are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank from November 28 to December 09, 2003, to file claims for insured deposits.

   PDIC representatives are stationed at the premises of the closed bank on the above cited dates to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors during office hours, Monday to Friday.

   After the said dates, all depositors can file their claims personally at the PDIC Office from Monday to Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., or by mail addressed to-

   The Manager
   Claims Processing Department
   Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation
   2228 Chino Roces Avenue
   1231 Makati City

3. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to the PDIC representatives when filing their claims:

   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposits.
   b. Latest identification documents (ID) bearing the depositor's signature.

   Other documents may be required by the PDIC representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

4. Pursuant to the provision of R.A. 3591, as amended, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Maco (Compostela Valley), Inc. is on April 30, 2005. After April 30, 2005, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION

(PDI-Nov. 27 & 28, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
COTABATO CITY WATER DISTRICT
Cotabato City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Cotabato City Water District invites interested parties to submit sealed bids for public bidding of Supply and Delivery of materials with an approved budget of P8,689,801.73 for the following:

I. Flocculation Structure and Civil Works
II. Pipelines and Related Civil Works

Issuance of Bid Documents schedule
I : December 04-12, 2003
II : January 05-14, 2004

Interested parties may secure Bid Documents and Detailed Specifications during office hours at Cotabato City Water District, Governor Gutierrez Avenue, Cotabato City.

Opening of bids shall be indicated in the bid documents as per schedule.

The CCWD reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any defect therein and make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the CCWD. The CCWD likewise assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee that the award shall be made.

(Sgd.) **MANUEL D. MAGDAEL**
Chairperson
Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI--Nov. 27 & Dec. 3, 2003)

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

RE-INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Housing Authority invites contractors who have completed similar projects costing at least 50% of the proposed contract and accredited with PCAB to bid for the contract listed below.

Contract Package/Location	Approved Budget	PCAB License	Work Description
Land Development of Malabon MRH Project, Malabon	P14.588 Million	"B"/MA for Roads	Land development works including road works, drainage, water and sewerage works

A. Interested contractors are required to secure from the BAC Secretariat Office, 2nd Floor, NHA Main Building, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City the list of basic requirements for registration and eligibility. Only NHA registered contractors shall be allowed to participate in the eligibility screening. Unregistered bidders must register not later than the deadline of submission of letter of intent on December 12, 2003

B. The schedules of the eligibility screening and bidding activities are as follows:
Issuance of Eligibility Forms – November 28-December 12, 2003
Deadline of Submission of Eligibility Req'ts – December 15, 2003/10:00 A.M.
Issuance of Bid Documents – December 16-23, 2003
Pre-Bid Conference – January 6, 2004/ 10:00 A.M.
Dropping of Bids/Opening of Bids – January 20, 2004 not later than 10:00 A.M.

C. Eligibility requirement forms may be obtained upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P200.00 at the NHA-BAC Secretariat Office. The Secretariat may be contacted at Tel. Nos. 929-80-16 and 928-45-61/6 local 202.

D. Bid documents shall be issued to eligible bidders only upon payment of non-refundable fee of P2,500.00

E. Bid security/deposits shall be in the form of cash, manager's or cashier's check only.

F. The provisions of the IRR of RA 9184 shall govern all particulars relative to registration, eligibility screening, bidding, evaluation of bids, post-qualification and award of contract.

G. NHA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive formally any minor defect thereon, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government.

(Sgd.) JOSEPH PETER S. SISON
Assistant General Manager
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – Nov 27 & Dec 4, 2003)

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

PNOC Energy Companies Bldg., Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1201 Makati City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO Tel. No. 893-6001 [illegible]

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC - Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and bid for the project:

2004 ANNUAL CONTRACT ON EQUIPMENT RENTAL FOR SNGPF
EDC03-191

The contract duration is 1 year. The ceiling rates shall be based on the prevailing ACEL guidebook. Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o I.M. Corcuera) starting November 14, 2003, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: Two Hundred (P200.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on November 25, 2003, 9:30 a.m. at the Admin. Complex, SNGPF, Ticala, Valencia, Neg. Or.. Site inspection will follow thereafter.

Applications for Eligibility must be submitted to the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group not later than 5:00 p.m. of December 4, 2003

Contractor, not yet included in the PNOC-EDC's List of Registered Contractors, who wishes to participate in the public bidding, in order to facilitate eligibility check/screening is requested to register with the said registration office by submitting the following basic requirements which should be maintained current and updated every year: 1) DTI Business Name Registration and/or Certified true copy of valid SEC Registration Certificate, as appropriate; 2) Current Mayor's Permit/Municipal License, 3) Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN); 4) Value Added Tax (VAT) Certificate of Registration; 5) Notarized statement that contractor/firm is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation, including, non-inclusion in the "blacklist" of contractors issued by CIAP. 6) Audited Financial Statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing among others, its total and current assets and liabilities inclusive of Income Tax Return and Receipt; and 7) Contractor's License, where applicable. A Certificate of Registration shall be issued to contractors upon approval.

Sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at the above address not later than 2:00 p.m. of December 16, 2003 and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC

(Sgd.) SERGIO A.F. APOSTOL
Chairman, President and CEO

(PDI--Nov. 27, 2003)

B6
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Main Office: PASONG TAMO, MAKATI CITY
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(632) 845-2341 or (632) 845-2342
sales@heritagepark.com.ph

Victoria Marfori Marquez

("Tuying")

December 15, 1916 – November 26, 2003

Peacefully joined her Creator at the age of 86.

Spouse to **Carlos, Sr.**; Mother to **Maria Cristina** (†), **Carlos, Jr.**, **Maria Pilar**, **Maria Carlotta**, **Maria Patricia**, and **Maria Barbara**; Grandmother to thirteen children.

We request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains now lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Friday, November 28, 2003 immediately after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

In Loving Memory
on the 10th Death Anniversary
of the late

VICTORIA (TOYANG) G. CUSTODIO

who peacefully passed away
on November 27, 1993.

Holy Mass will be offered today November 27, 2003 at the following churches:

Schedule of Masses:

Tondo (Sto. Niño) Church	5:00 PM
Divina Pastora Parish Church	8:00 AM
St. Dominic Church 2002 Merton Avenue, Los Angeles, CA USA 90041	10:00 AM
San Lorenzo Ruiz (SSS) Chapel	12:00 NN
San Beda (Sto. Niño de Prague) Chapel	6:30 AM
UERM Hospital Chapel	12:00 NN
Don Bosco (Tondo) Chapel	5:00 PM
Sacred Heart Parish	5:00 PM
Nuestra Señora de Guia (Ermita) Parish	6:15 PM
St. Paul Parish (Timog)	6:00 PM

"...absent
with
the body
to be
present
with
the
Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8

DEATH NOTICE

HELEN P. RELLOSA

(April 28, 1953 - November 19, 2003)
Joined our Creator at the age of 50.
Interment will be on November 29, 2003, 10:00 a.m.
Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque.

Our Beloved

(Ret.) Col. Luis B. Franco y Carlos, M.D.

formerly of V. Luna Gen. Hospital, AFP
UP MD Class '38
and **San Luis, Pampanga**

Peacefully joined our Creator
on November 24, 2003 at the age of 90.

His loving wife **Eglantine Gonzalez**; his devoted children **Maria Eloisa** and **Ralph Diaz**; **Luis L., Jr.** and **Ellen Samson**; **Eglantine** and **Eldon Valerio**; **Clementina** and **Orson Battad**; his grandchildren **Regina, Laurie, Reuven, Jun** and **Elena**; **Luis III** and **Lorraine**; **Erik** and **Deke**; **Marky** and **Francis**; greatgrandchildren **Luis IV**, **Abby** and **Finlay**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the St. Paul the Apostle Church located at the Mother Ignacia Street and Timog Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, November 30, 2003 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 10:00 a.m. Mass.

AGUEDA CRUZ FRANCO

Peacefully joined her Creator
on November 25, 2003 at the age of 79.

Her late husband **Pergentino** (†); loving children **Gerry**, **Finina** and **Fitz**; sisters, brothers, relatives request the pious readers to pray for her eternal rest.

Her body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Inc., Guadalupe, Makati.

Interment will be on Saturday, November 29, 2003 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

ALFRED ADIARTE BATISTA

has serenely joined his Creator last November 24, 2003
at the age of 51.

His bereaved parents **Dr. Atilano Batista** and **Mrs. Manuela (Lita) Adiarte**; sister and brother-in-law, **Elizabeth Ann Batista** and **Jun Santiago**; immediate family **Blessie Nicol** and son **Michael Allen**; **Yolanda Ramirez** and daughters **Crystal Lyn** and **Catherine Leigh**; other relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Chapel. Interment will be on Saturday, November 29, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat Road, Parañaque City after the 9:00 A.M. Mass at the St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Chapel #3, Magallanes Village, Makati City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

ARLINGTON MEMORIAL CHAPEL
12 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City: Tels. 715-1025; 715-1031; 715-1027
ARLINGTON EAST THE GARDEN CHAPELS
C. Raymundo St. cor. Mercedes Ave., San Miguel Ave., Pasig City
Tels. 747-8599; 747-8609 • Telefax 641-1760
AUREA QUIOGUE FUNERAL HOMES
243 A.B. Fernandez Ave., Dagupan City, Pangasinan;
Tels. (0785) 522-3451; 522-2128; (0917) 434-9976
CAPITOL MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
1305 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City • Tel. 732-0309; 732-1095
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City,
Cebu: Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City: Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City;
Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258
DAYAO FUNERAL HOME
#2 Bayani St., Galas, Quezon City;
Tels. 740-2683; 781-3705; 781-3688; 413-9400; 715-5594
DALLUAY MEMORIAL SERVICES
#42 Upper Kalaklan, Olongapo City
Tels. (047) 222-3605; (047) 811-1086; (047) 222-4512; (047) 224-2014
DON BOSCO CHAPELS
Pasay Road, Makati City: Tel. 894-5932 to 34
DULCE MEMORIAL SERVICES
Jose Abad Santos Ave. cor. Dinalupihan St., Manuguit, Manila
Tels. 712-5102; 741-5125; 741-5133; Fax No. 711-3064
DYNASTY MEMORIAL CHAPELS
965 Del Monte Ave., Frisco, Quezon City: Tels. 416-3231; 4162373
ERIC SANTIAGO MEMORIAL CHAPELS
26 Bayanbayan Ave., Concepcion I, Marikina City;
Tels. 942-6044; 475-1177
FLORESCO FUNERAL HOME
219 Gen. Luna St., Concepcion, Malabon, Metro Manila;
Tels. 2812963; 2813034; 2810522
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HERITAGE PARK
Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila; Tels. (DL) 845-2341 to 42;
(TL) 845-2334 to 38 loc. 110/112
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Third Level, Unishoppe Complex, Quezon Ave., Angono, Rizal
Tels. 651-1711; 651-0737
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Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat Rd., Sucat, Parañaque City;
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#27 Crisologo St., Vigan, Ilocos Sur;
Tel. 722-2730; Cell (0917) 5680136; (0917) 5680145
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Tels. 711-6931 to 35; 732-4795; 732-2827
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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 90, QUEZON CITY

IN THE MATTER OF:

PETITION FOR REHABILITATION WITH PRAYER FOR SUSPENSION OF ACTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS AGAINST PETITIONER.

SPECIAL PROCEEDING NO. Q-03-071

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.,
Petitioner.
x - x

STAY ORDER

Before this Court is a verified petition/application for rehabilitation filed by the above-named petitioner.

Briefly, the petitioner alleges that despite the fact that it has total assets of PhP16,940,306,229.61 as of October 31, 2003, it foresees an impossibility of meeting its debts as they respectively fall due. The petitioner contends that on the basis of projected market conditions for the next nine (9) years, 2003-2012, it has a good chance of being rehabilitated. The rehabilitation plan calls for the rescheduling and restructuring of Maynilad's suspended and current concession fees to MWSS with interest at 9% per annum and rescheduling and restructuring of a big part of its outstanding debts/liabilities, in the total sum of PhP17,592,043,124.08 as of October 31, 2003, among other things. Consequently, the petitioner prays for the issuance of a Stay Order pending proceedings before this Court.

A careful examination of the petition shows that the same conforms substantially with Section 2, Rule 4 of the Interim Rules of Procedure on Corporate Rehabilitation (see also Supreme Court Resolution en banc in A.M. No. 00-8-10-SC). This Court therefore finds the petition to be sufficient in form and substance.

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, this Court issues Stay Order, in accordance with Section 6, Rule 4 of the aforecited Interim Rules, as follows:

1.) Appointing Mrs. Rosario S. Bernaldo, a certified public accountant, lawyer and management practitioner by profession with residence at 19865 Willow Street, Executive Heights Subdivision, Parañaque, Metro Manila, as rehabilitation receiver who shall be considered as an officer of the court and who shall have the powers, duties and functions as provided in Section 14, Rule 4 of the aforecited Interim Rules. The rehabilitation receiver must post a bond of PhP4,000,000.00 before entering upon her powers, duties and functions and must take an oath, as provided under Section 15, Rule 4 of the aforecited Interim Rules. The petitioner is directed to serve immediately a copy of this Stay Order upon the rehabilitation receiver, Mrs. Rosario S. Bernaldo who shall manifest her acceptance or non-acceptance of her appointment not later than five (5) days from her receipt hereof;

2.) Staying enforcement of all claims, whether for money or otherwise and whether such enforcement is by court action or otherwise, against the petitioner, its guarantors and service not solidarily liable with the petitioner;

3.) Prohibiting the petitioner from selling, encumbering, transferring, or disposing in any manner any of its properties except in the ordinary course of business;

4.) Prohibiting the petitioner from making any payment of its liabilities outstanding as at the date of the filing of the petition;

5.) Prohibiting the suppliers of the petitioner from withholding supply of goods and services in the ordinary course of business for as long as the petitioner makes payments for the services and goods supplied after the issuance of this Stay Order;

6.) Directing the petitioner to pay in full all administrative expenses incurred after issuance of this Stay Order;

The initial hearing on the petition is set on January 7, 2004 (Wednesday) at 9:00 A.M. at the session room of Branch 90 of this Court located at the Ground Floor of the Hall of Justice Building, Quezon City Hall complex, Quezon City. All creditors and all interested parties including the Securities and Exchange Commission are directed to file with this Court and serve upon the petitioner a verified comment on or opposition to the petition, with supporting affidavits and documents, not later than ten (10) days before the date of the initial hearing as set forth above, and they are put on notice that their failure to do so will bar them from participating in the proceedings before this Court. All creditors and all interested parties are further directed to secure from this Court copies of the petition and its annexes within such time as to enable them to file their verified comment on or opposition to the petition and to prepare them for the initial hearing of the petition, and to attain this purpose, the petitioner is ordered to file with this Court initially twenty (20) additional copies of the petition and its annexes within ten (10) days from receipt hereof.

The petitioner is furthermore directed by this Court to have a copy of this Order published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, the Manila Bulletin, The Philippine Star, and one other newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines with widespread circulation in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao if it is a newspaper chosen by raffle other than the herein-named newspapers, considering the billions of pesos involved in this case and the probable presence of creditors and interested parties all over the country, once a week for two consecutive weeks, with the last publication effected at least, three (3) weeks prior to the date of initial hearing as set forth above, at the expense of the petitioner.

The Branch Clerk of Court, Atty. Armand H. Mejia is ordered to see to it that Mr. Noel B. Mandap, the Process Server, shall serve immediately copies of this Order upon: 1) Mr. Rafael M. Alunan III (the president and duly authorized representative of the petitioner) c/o Maynilad Water Services, Inc., MWSS Compound, Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City; 2) Atty. Joshua Gilbert F. Paraiso (the counsel of petitioner), 12th Floor, East Tower, Philippine Stock Exchange Center, Exchange Road, Ortigas Center, Pasig City; 3) Atty. Rosario S. Bernaldo (the rehabilitation receiver), 19865 Willow Street, Executive Heights Subdivision, Parañaque, Metro Manila; 4) the Administrator, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), MWSS Compound, Katipunan, Balara, Quezon City; 5) the Honorable Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission, EDSA (Epifanio De Los Santos Avenue), Mandaluyong City.

SO ORDERED.
Quezon City, November 17, 2003.

(Sgd.) REYNALDO B. DAWAY
Presiding Judge

(PDI–Nov. 20 & 27, 2003)

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Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of **Nine (9) units Asian Utility Vehicles** for the purpose of implementing the provisions of the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 and its IRR, specifically in the enforcement of the Anti-Smoke Belching Campaign.

The approved budget for the contract to be bid is Six Million Seventeen Thousand Pesos (P6,017,000.00) from the Metro Manila Air Quality Improvement Sector Development Program (MMAQISDP) loan of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Eligibility screening is open to the following suppliers, manufacturers and/or distributors whether 100% local or at most 40% foreign-owned:

a. Duly Licensed Individual/sole proprietorship;
b. Partnership or Corporations;
c. Manufacturers/suppliers/distributors forming themselves into a joint venture; and
d. Cooperative duly registered with Cooperative Development Authority (CDA)

Eligibility forms and other documents are available for issuance until the deadline on **08 December 2003, 3:00 P.M.** at the DOTC BAC for the Implementation of the CAA Rules and Regulations Office, 16th Floor, The Columbia Tower, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila. Last day of submission of duly accomplished Eligibility Statements shall be received not later than **11 December 2003, 10:00 A.M.** Opening of Eligibility documents will follow at 2:00 P.M. at the BAC Office.

Eligible parties shall be issued a complete set of proposal documents starting on **22 December 2003** to **25 January 2004** upon submission of a Letter of Intent to the above Office and payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00) in cash or manager's check payable to DOTC.

Sealed bids shall be received at the BAC Office not later than **20 February 2004, 3:00 P.M.** at the same address. Opening of bid proposals shall be held immediately thereafter at the same office.

The DOTC-BAC for the Implementation of the CAA Rules and Regulations reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formality in the bids received, and accept such offer that may be considered most advantageous to the Government.

The bidder shall bear all costs in the preparation of their bids and the government shall in no case be responsible or liable for their costs regardless of the outcome of the bidding process.

(Sgd.) **ARTURO T. VALDEZ**
Undersecretary for Transportation
Chairman, BAC

(PDI–Nov. 22 & 27, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of **Forty-Five (45) Units Opacity Meters** for the purpose of implementing the provisions of the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 and its IRR, specifically in the enforcement of the Anti-Smoke Belching Campaign.

The approved budget for the contract to be bid is Thirteen Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P13,500,000.00) from the Metro Manila Air Quality Improvement Sector Development Program (MMAQISDP) loan of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) now invites sealed quotations from eligible suppliers who are member countries of ADB for the supply of the above item for the purpose of the Project.

Eligibility forms and other documents are available for issuance until the deadline on **08 December 2003, 3:00 p.m.** at the DOTC BAC for the Implementation of the CAA Rules and Regulations Office, 16th Floor, The Columbia Tower, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila. Last day of submission of duly accomplished Eligibility Statements shall be received not later than **11 December 2003, 10:00 a.m.** Opening of Eligibility documents will follow at 2:00 p.m. at the BAC Office.

Eligible parties shall be issued a complete set of proposal documents starting on **22 December 2003** to **25 January 2004** upon submission of a Letter of Intent to the above Office and payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00) in cash or manager's check payable to DOTC.

Sealed bids shall be received at the BAC Office not later than **20 February 2004, 3:00 P.M.** at the same address. Opening of bid proposals shall be held immediately thereafter at the same office.

The DOTC-BAC for the Implementation of the CAA Rules and Regulations reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formality in the bids received, and accept such offer that may be considered most advantageous to the Government.

The bidder shall bear all costs in the preparation of their bids and the government shall in no case be responsible or liable for their costs regardless of the outcome of the bidding process.

(Sgd.) **ARTURO T. VALDEZ**
Undersecretary for Transportation
Chairman, BAC

(PDI--Nov. 22 & 27, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Visit the SSS website for Bid Invitations

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

RENTAL SERVICE OF PLAIN PAPER COPIER

The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM is inviting bidders for a two-year contract for the rental of brand new plain paper copier/photocopying machine, heavy duty with enlarger/reducer for SSS Main and Branch Offices.

Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) for one (1) year: P6,383,287.00

Source of Funding : Equipment Rental - Photocopier

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Particulars	Date	Venue
Issuance of eligibility requirements	November 27 to December 10, 2003	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Deadline of submission of eligibility requirements	December 15, 2003	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Issuance of Bidding Documents to Eligible Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00	December 18, 2003	BAC Secretariat, 6th Flr., SSS Main Bldg.
Pre-bid Conference	December 22, 2003 2:00 p.m.	Bidding Room, 6th Floor, SSS Main Building
Submission & Opening of Bids shall be announced and confirmed through a Bid Bulletin.		

For any inquiry, please call telephone numbers 922-2991 or 920-6401 local 5490/5491.

This bidding shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act".

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

This Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid is a re-publication.

THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI--Nov. 27, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the supply of **Fifty-Two (52) Units Gas Analyzers** for the purpose of implementing the provisions of the Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 and its IRR, specifically in the enforcement of the Anti-Smoke Belching Campaign.

The approved budget for the contract to be bid is Fifteen Million Six Hundred Thousand Pesos (P15,600,000.00) from the Metro Manila Air Quality Improvement Sector Development Program (MMAQISDP) loan of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) now invites sealed quotations from eligible suppliers who are member countries of ADB for the supply of the above item for the purpose of the Project.

Eligibility forms and other documents are available for issuance until the deadline on **08 December 2003, 3:00 p.m.** at the DOTC BAC for the Implementation of the CAA Rules and Regulations Office, 16th Floor, The Columbia Tower, Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila. Last day of submission of duly accomplished Eligibility Statements shall be received not later than **11 December 2003, 10:00 a.m.** Opening of Eligibility documents will follow at 2:00 p.m. at the BAC Office.

Eligible parties shall be issued a complete set of proposal documents starting on **22 December 2003** to **25 January 2004** upon submission of a Letter of Intent to the above Office and payment of a non-refundable fee of Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00) in cash or manager's check payable to DOTC.

Sealed bids shall be received at the BAC Office not later than **20 February 2004, 3:00 P.M.** at the same address. Opening of bid proposals shall be held immediately thereafter at the same office.

The DOTC-BAC for the Implementation of the CAA Rules and Regulations reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formality in the bids received, and accept such offer that may be considered most advantageous to the Government.

The bidder shall bear all costs in the preparation of their bids and the government shall in no case be responsible or liable for their costs regardless of the outcome of the bidding process.

(Sgd.) **ARTURO T. VALDEZ**
Undersecretary for Transportation
Chairman, BAC

(PDI--Nov. 22 & 27, 2003)

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Day 2, December 03, 2003: Focus on Electronic Payment and Solutions

• Electronic Payment as a major challenge in e-Business • Internet Security: Making online transactions secured • Online Payment Solution • Wireless Financial Transactions (mobile banking & remittance) • Wireless Payment - what's the uptake? • Business Consultation Session

Day 3, December 04, 2003: Focus on Convergent Technologies

• Convergent Technologies: Making it Affordable for SMEs doing e-Business • Making ERP solutions accessible to SMEs • Making Wi-Fi technology accessible to SMEs • Mobility and Wireless Solutions for SMEs • Transforming the Internet Café into shared access and business solutions center • Making inventory management more efficient through automation • Sales automation using wireless and mobile technologies • Business Consultation Session

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3 CHAVIT SINGSON
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10 WRONG TURN

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SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1 COLD CREEK MANOR
2 SCARY MOVIE 3
3 THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
4 THE GRUDGE
5 LOONEY TUNES
6 MASTER & COMMANDER
7 AKO, IKAW, SIYA
8 WRONG TURN
9 MR. SUAVE
10 ZHOU YU'S TRAIN
11 THE WISHER
12 CHAVIT SINGSON

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1 IDENTITY
2 MR. SUAVE
3 UNDERWORLD
4 DARK BLUE

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2 MR. SUAVE
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1 COLD CREEK MANOR
11:00 FS/11:20 MF/1:40/4:00/6:20/8:40/10:40 LFS/11:00 LMF/1:00 END

2 LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION
10:30 FS/11:00 MF/1:00/3:00/5:10/7:00/9:00/10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:30 END

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4 COLD CREEK MANOR 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
2 SCARY MOVIE 3 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
5 LOONEY TUNES 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
3 MASTER AND COMMANDER 10:10, 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:00
6 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS 10:50, 1:35, 5:20, 7:05, 9:50
7 AKO IKAW SIYA 11:00, 1:00, 3:00, 5:00 7:00 9:00
9 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY 12:20, 4:40, 9:00 12:50
8 MR. SUAVE 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
10 THE GRUDGE 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00

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2 MASTER AND COMMANDER - 10:55, 1:45, 4:35, 7:25, 10:00
3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 LOONEY TUNES - 11:05, 12:55, 2:45, 4:35, 6:25, 8:15, 10:00
5 MR. SUAVE - 10:30, 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30, 9:50
6 SCARY MOVIE 3 - 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50
7 COLD CREEK MANOR - 10:30, 12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30, 9:50

Metro East
Marcos hway
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682-8280

1 SCARY MOVIE 3
2 LOONEY TUNES
3 LOONEY TUNES
4 COLD CREEK MANOR
5 MASTER AND COMMANDER
6 THE CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
7 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
8 MR. SUAVE

Novaliches
935-3229 / 31

1 MASTER AND COMMANDER
2 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
3 COLD CREEK MANOR
4 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
5 MR. SUAVE
6 SCARY MOVIE 3
7 ZHOU YU'S TRAIN
8 MASTER AND COMMANDER

Malabon 288-0985/2575		Cainta 240-4601
CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	1	RESERVED
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MASTER AND COMMANDER	4	RESERVED

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CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	2	LOONEY TUNES
WRONG TURN	3	SEX SCANDAL
MR. SUAVE	4	MR. SUAVE
MASTER AND COMMANDER	5	MASTER AND COMMANDER

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MR. SUAVE	3	MR. SUAVE
THE SPY	4	COLD CREEK MANOR
LOONEY TUNES	5	SCARY MOVIE 3
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MASTER AND COMMANDER PG13 1:40, 4:30, 7:20, 10:10	MATRIX REVOLUTIONS PG13 12:00, 2:25, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50	LOONEY TUNES GP 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:40

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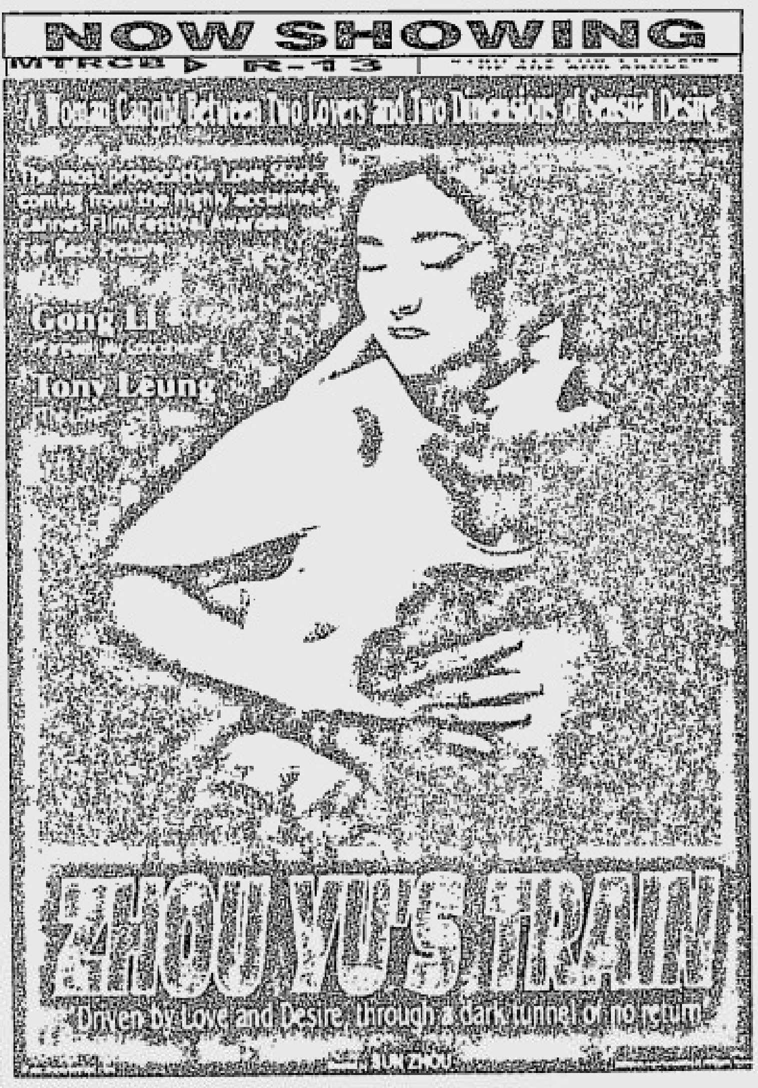
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Gong Li
Tony Leung
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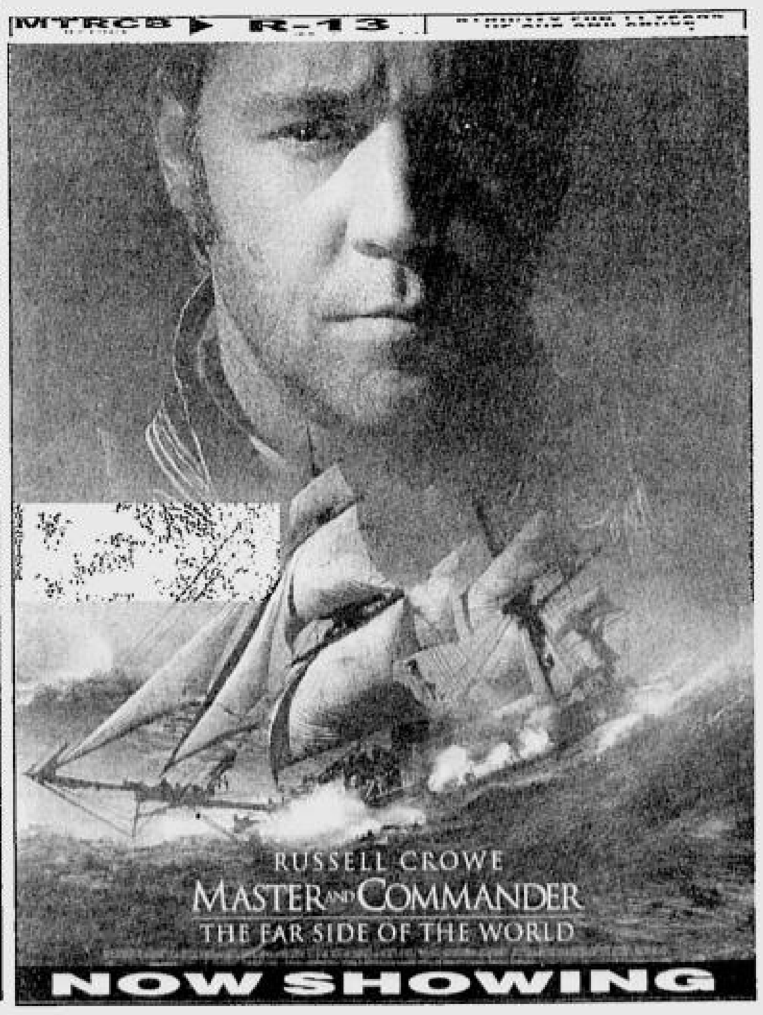
Driven by Love and Desire, through a dark tunnel of no return
SUN ZHOU



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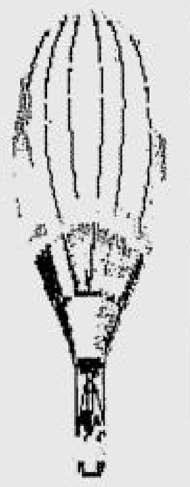

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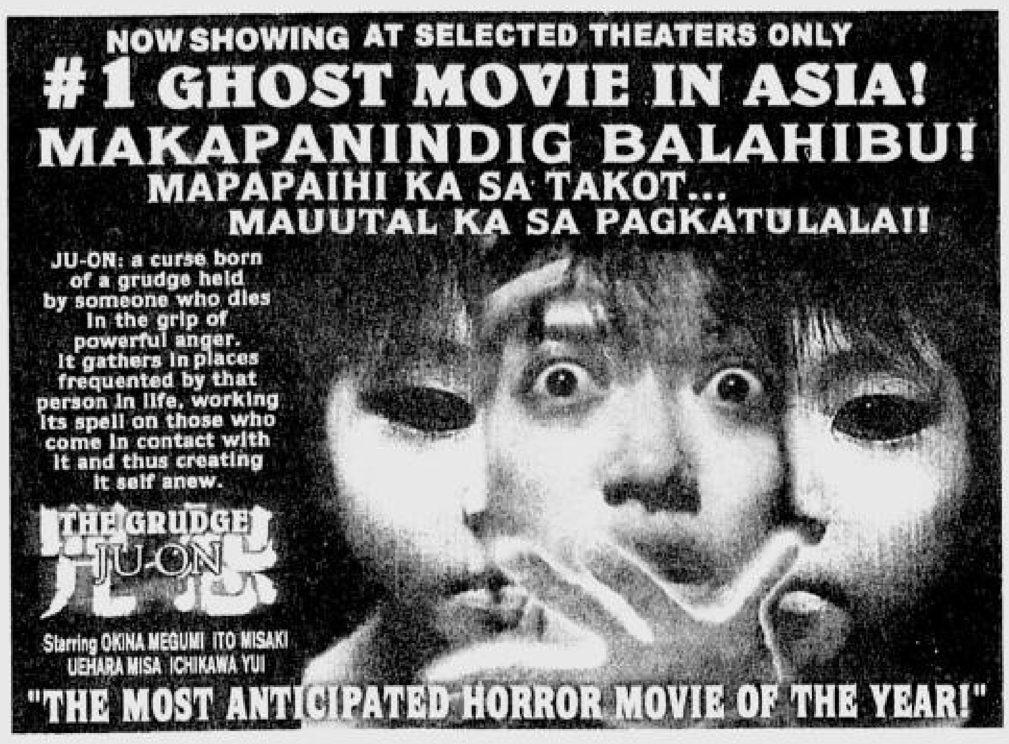

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G1 GLORIETTA 1
- 1 MR. SUAVE
- 2 LOONEY TUNES
- 3 THE GRUDGE
- 4 CHAVIT

G4 GLORIETTA 4
- 1 SCARY MOVIE 3
- 2 COLD CREEK MANOR
- THX GUARANTEED SEATS MASTER & COMMANDER 1:30 4:30 7:30 10:30
- 4 THE MATRIX REVOLUTION
- 5 CHAVIT
- 6 LOONEY TUNES
- 7 THE GRUDGE

GB1 GREENBELT 1
- ArtFilm 1 ASH WEDNESDAY 12:40 2:45 4:50 6:55 9:00
- 2 THE GRUDGE 12:25 2:35 4:45 6:55 9:00
- REGINE VELASQUEZ NOV 28, 29, 9PM

GB3 GREENBELT 3
- GUARANTEED SEATS THX COLD CREEK MANOR 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00 11:30
- GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 LOONEY TUNES 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00 11:00
- GUARANTEED SEATS 3 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN 1:30 3:45 6:00 8:15 10:30
- GUARANTEED SEATS 4 SCARY MOVIE 3 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00 11:00
- GUARANTEED SEATS MATRIX REVOLUTIONS 2:00 5:00 8:00 11:00

ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
- THX 1 LOONEY TUNES
- 2 COLD CREEK MANOR
- 3 SCARY MOVIE 3
- 4 MASTER AND COMMANDER
- 5 CHAVIT

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- 2 COLD CREEK MANOR
- 3 LOONEY TUNES
- 4 MATRIX REVOLUTION
- 5 LOONEY TUNES
- 6 MASTER & COMMANDER
- 7 SCARY MOVIE-3
- 8 MR. SUAVE
- 9 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 10 GRUDGE-1

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- 2 RESERVE
- 3 RESERVE
- 4 RESERVE
- 5 RESERVE
- 6 RESERVE
- Golden Pearl THX RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA (Pasay) tel 833.3290, 833.3274
- 1 MR. CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 2 LOONEY TUNES
- 3 AKO, IKAW, SIYA

starmall Movies www.clickthecity.com.ph (Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
- 1 MR. SUAVE
- 2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 3 SCARY MOVIE-3
- 4 DOLBY DIGITAL LOONEY TUNES
- 5 AKO, IKAW, SIYA

METROPOLIS star www.clickthecity.com.ph (Alabang) tel 850.4285
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- 2 SEX SCANDAL
- 3 MR. SUAVE
- 4 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 5 MASTER & COMMANDER
- 6 LOONEY TUNES

star www.clickthecity.com.ph (Las Piñas) tel 873.5004
- 1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 2 MR. SUAVE

PREMIERE CINEMA (Makati City) TEL. 893-4225, 892-2503
- LOONEY TUNES

Center Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
- 1 MR. SUAVE
- 2 MATRIX REVOLUTIONS

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC tel 930.9515
- 1
- 2
- 3

Sunshine (FTI, Taguig) TEL. 776-74-21
- 1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 2 MR. SUAVE
- 3 RESERVE
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GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City (Manila) tel 734.8588
- 1 RESERVE
- 4 RESERVE
- 5 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 6 MR. SUAVE
- 7 LOONEY TUNES
- 8 COLD CREEK MANOR
- 9 TRAIN

Gotesco Caloocan tel 362.3508
- 2 RESERVE

Gotesco Grand Central (Caloocan) tel 364-3781
- 1 AKO, IKAW, SIYA
- 2 MR. SUAVE
- 3 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 4 LOONEY TUNES
- 5 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 6 MASTER & COMMANDER
- 7 SCARY MOVIE-3
- 8 TRAIN
- 9 SEX SCANDAL

Gotesco Commonwealth tel 951.0082
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- 2 MASTER & COMMANDER
- 3 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 4 LOONEY TUNES
- 5 MR. SUAVE

Gotesco Ortigas tel 656.6795
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- 2 MR. SUAVE
- 3 MASTER & COMMANDER
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- 5 LOONEY TUNES

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Sampaguita (Cubao) tel 911.7888
- 1 RESERVE

Dilson (Manila) tel 734.7724
- Dilson AKO, IKAW, SIYA
- Lords AKO, IKAW, SIYA
- Jennet RESERVE

MARALITA Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
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- 2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 3 AKO, IKAW, SIYA
- 4 LOONEY TUNES

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto SUPER CINERAMA tel 733.4238
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- 4 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 5 MR. SUAVE

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- 5 MASTER AND COMMANDER
- 6 SCARY MOVIE 3
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Farmers Plaza CINEMAS tel 911.3101 loc. 821,8242 8400
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- 2 RESERVE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall (Sta. Rosa Laguna) TEL. (049) 837-0920
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- 2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 3 MR. SUAVE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
- 1 LOONEY TUNES
- 2 MR. SUAVE
- 3 WRONG TURN
- 4 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY

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- 4

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- 3

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- 2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
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- 4 WRONG TURN
- 5 MR. SUAVE

Olivarez Tri-Cinema (Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
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- 2 LOONEY TUNES
- 3

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Mega Center Mall (Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
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- 2 RESERVE
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- 4 UNDERWORLD

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- 1 RESERVE
- 2 RESERVE

Emperor (Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
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- 2 MR. SUAVE
- 3

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- 2 LOONEY TUNES
- 3 MASTER & COMMANDER
- 4 MR. SUAVE

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045)887-6001 10 03
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- 2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
- 3 MR. SUAVE
- 4

Cine Nepo Mall (Angeles City) tel (045) 887-0121
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- 2 MR. SUAVE
- 3 WRONG TURN
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FOR INQUIRES CALL

Neri backs Amatong appointment

By Clarissa S. Batino

ECONOMIC Planning Secretary Romulo Neri would not take over the post that outgoing Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho would vacate by the end of the week despite the strong backing of several business groups.

"I am happy for the vote of confidence but I believe the president has made her choice and that is undersecretary (Juanita) Amatong whom I believe is very credible and very capable," said Neri in an interview.

Amatong currently heads the International Finance Group and the Municipal Development Fund Office. She was formerly the executive director of the World Bank Group in Washington responsible for nine countries including the Philippines.

Amatong had served as Finance undersecretary during the Aquino and Ramos administrations and was convinced to go back to the DoF under President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Business groups, however, said that Neri was ideal for the job as he would help calm down investors worried over the government's ability to rein in the deficit once Camacho leaves his post at the end of the month.

These groups include the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Philippine Industries, Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce Inc., Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, Employers Confederation of the Philippines, Confederation of Garments Exporters of the Philippines Inc. and Philippines Inc.

Amatong was not very popular among investors and her reluctance to take on a more committed role at the Department of Finance had not helped ease the market's jitters, analysts said.

Amatong earlier said that she only wanted to be an officer-in-charge of the DoF and not an acting secretary.

Camacho recommended that Amatong be named to replace him to provide some stability at the DoF.

"Amatong is a mutual choice for me and the president. When I brought up her name, it seems that she is exactly whom the president had in mind," Camacho earlier said.

"I hope that eventually, she could be convinced to accept the designation of acting secretary," said Camacho. Industrialist Raul T. Concepcion, meanwhile, said that President Macapagal should appoint Amatong as acting Finance Secretary rather than a mere officer-in-charge to send a "clear signal of continuity and stability in the financial market."

Concepcion cited Amatong's long experience as head of the International Finance Group which has helped her to establish a good relationship with multilateral financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Concepcion also noted that Amatong had the support of the DOF's remaining officials, notably Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Wilfredo Parayno and Bureau of Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo and even NEDA Secretary Romulo Neri. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Japanese firms still confident about RP

By Michelle V. Remo

JAPANESE businessmen have remained confident about the Philippines despite market jitters over the national elections next year.

In a survey conducted early this month by the Japan External Trade Organization, 28.6 percent of the 238 respondent Japanese firms said that their business would fare better in the coming months, while only 20.2 percent believed it would be worse.

The remaining 51.3 percent said it would be the same.

The results translated to a diffusion index (DI) of 8.4 points, which was higher than the 8.2 points recorded in October, indicating a positive outlook.

The Philippines posted the third highest DI among five countries in the region, besting Indonesia and Malaysia, which posted a DI of 2 points and a negative 4.5 points, respectively. Thailand and Singapore got the highest marks of 16.2 points and 14.1 points.

The survey also showed that more Japanese firms were satisfied with the performance of their businesses at present compared to the previous month.

Some 34.9 percent of the respondents said business was better at present, while only 21 percent said it was worse, resulting in a DI of 13.9 points. The other 44.1 percent said business was the same.

Jetro, the Japanese government agency tasked to oversee Japanese businesses in the various countries where it holds local offices, determines the DI by subtracting the number of negative responses from the positive responses.

The survey also showed that 24 percent of the respondents see an improvement in the demand for their products or services as well and the supply of raw materials. About 19.9 percent said it would be worse, while 5.1 percent said it would be the same.

More Japanese firms, however, expected that credit collection would be more difficult in the coming months.

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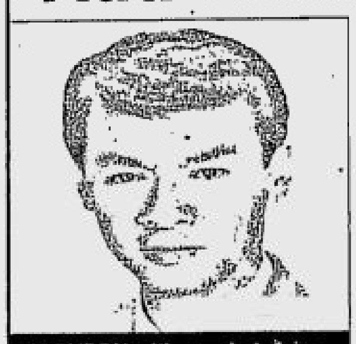
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GIL with baldness

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ANDY with baldness

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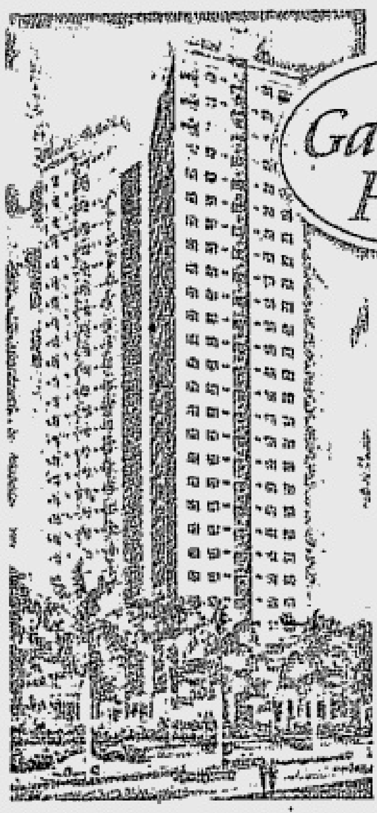
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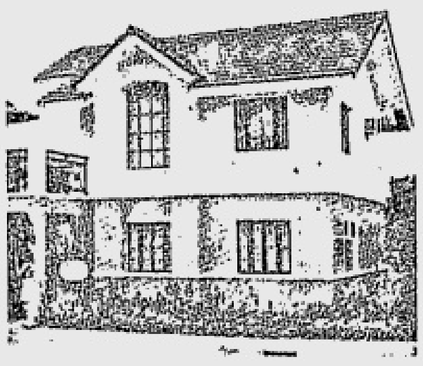
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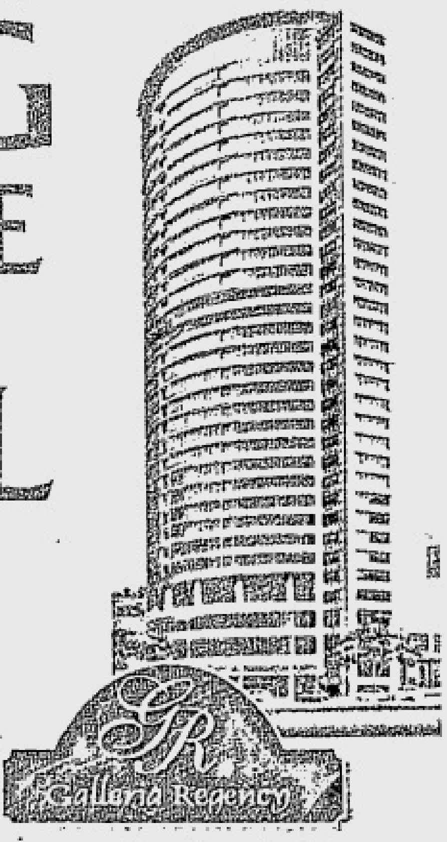
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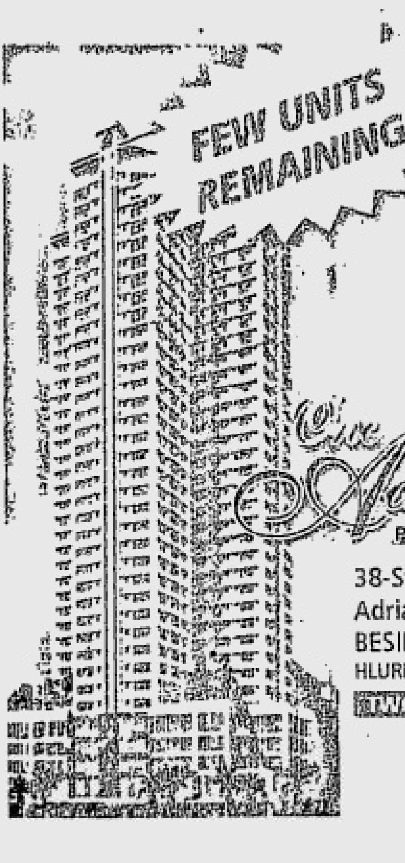
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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Proposed incentives may perk up auto parts industry

By Charles E. Buban

(Last of two parts)

BUSINESS for Top Grade Metal Industries (TGM) of Caloocan City is no longer what it used to be.

Starting out as a manufacturer of stainless automotive jeep accessories in 1975, TGM became, for some time, a substantial supplier of automotive parts and components for some of the big names in the auto industry.

"But when the Asian financial crisis struck (in the '90s), things abruptly changed. And for us belonging to the small- and medium-scale enterprise (SME) sector, we had to look for other opportunities, otherwise, we will not survive by just depending solely on supplying auto parts and components," reminisced TGM president Manuel Santos.

These days, majority of TGM operations is into furnishing metal works, steel fabrication, equipment fabrication and other related services to various engineering and architecture firms.

Resuming operation

Said Santos: "But if you'd ask me, we would love resuming our auto parts and components supply operation. We have the equipment and we can provide quality auto parts and components to any outfit out there."

Indeed, TGM is just one of the many SMEs waiting for the right time—and opportunity—to help the country's reeling auto industry.

But they are not alone hoping for a change.

In fact, the Chamber of Automobile Manufacturers of the Philippines (Campi) and the Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturers Association of the Philippines have been meeting with concerned government agencies so that the auto parts and components sector can also enjoy a similar export incentives that the CBU (completely built-up) vehicles exporters now have and in the process support the SMEs that make up the majority of this sector.

Supporting SMEs

In fact, the proposal recently submitted to the Board of Investments by Campi president Jose Alvarez and MVPMAP president Feliciano Torres gave special focus on SMEs.

The two organizations recommended a minimum value of $1 million (P55.6 million) annual exports to qualify for the proposed grant incentive.

The request is for incentives in the form of tariff preference through the application of credit of $400 for every $5,000 worth of exports phased down over five years.

Manufacturing base expansion

"This proposal was designed to help expand the manufacturing base since SMEs can be the backbone of the industry," explained Torres.

He believes that by providing for a minimum value, not only big manufacturers—with their minimum requirement of $10 million (P556 million) worth or yearly exports—but also SMEs can participate.

At present, there are around 260 firms involved in parts and components manufacturing business with an employment reaching 27,000.

Losing to China, Thailand

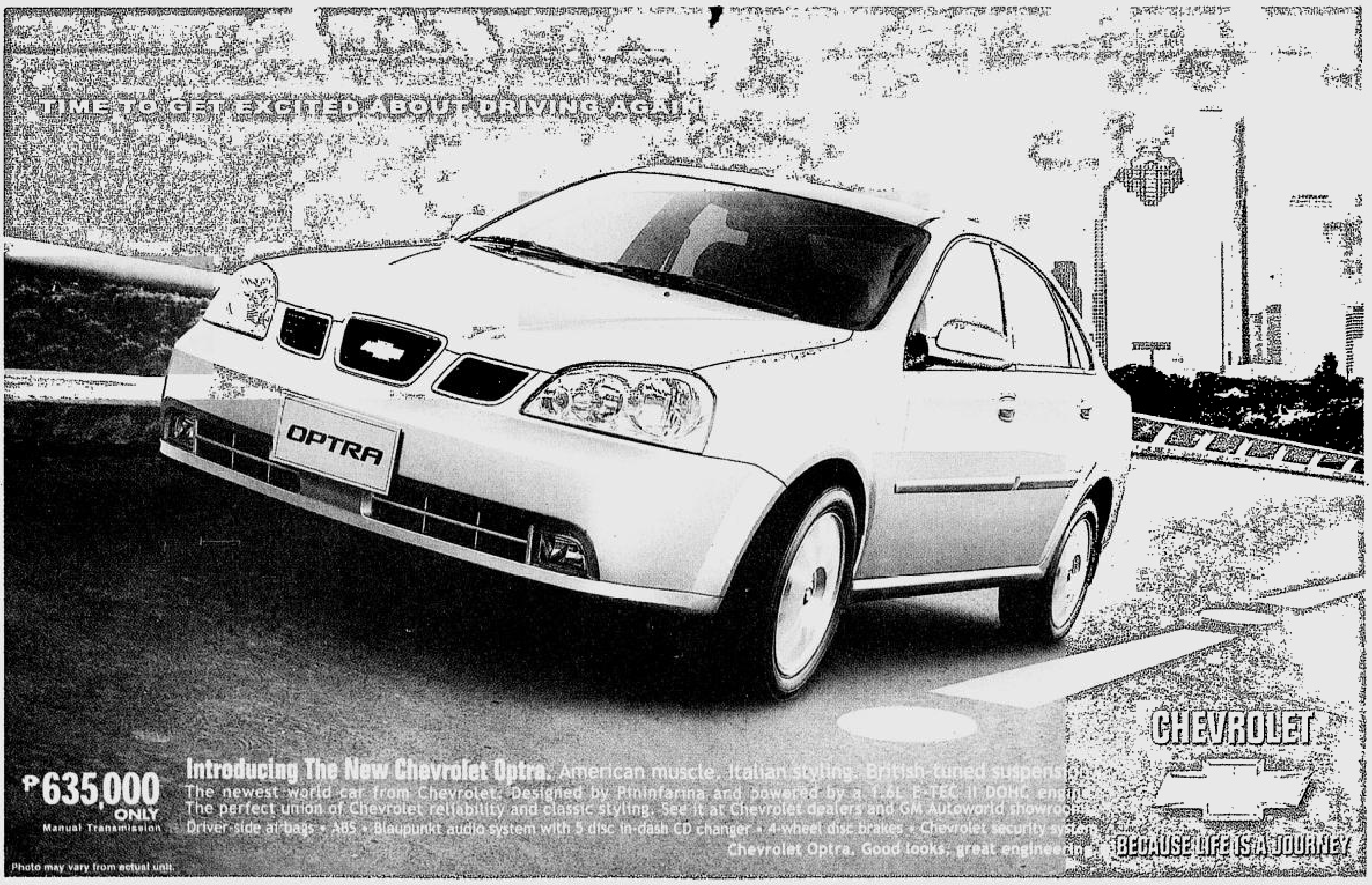
The auto industry estimates that auto parts and components exports are selling on the average 5 percent to 6 percent lower than the domestic price and some exporters are losing out to stiff competition from China and Thailand.

To address the challenges of having a higher freight and power costs, the government—through the Automotive Export Program of the Motor Vehicle Development Program (MVDP)—is looking at ways on how to provide manufacturers with incentive with the end goal of making the country the Asean hub for certain motor vehicles and parts and components manufacturing.

Executive Order 156 or the Comprehensive Industrial Policy and Directions for the Motor Vehicle Development Program, issued last Dec. 12, 2002, outlines the country's MVDP.

"One solution is using an average 8 percent incentive based on total value of exports of which 5 percent could be used to overcome structural deficiencies and 3 percent for additional investments," suggested Torres.

He believes these twin benefits will increase productivity and enhance competitiveness.



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Mazda 6 receives global recognition

TO GET the recognition of a "What Car?" award is a real boost for the Mazda 6.

THE MAZDA 6 continues to gain worldwide recognition for its superb handling, functionality and distinctive styling.

Since its launch last year, the Mazda 6 has been honored with 50 awards in 22 countries and regions around the world, making it one of the most successful cars in Mazda's 82-year-old history.

Major awards

Some of the major awards the Mazda 6 has received worldwide are:

- United States All-Star Midsize Sedan
- Saudi Car of the Year: Best Midsize Family Sedan
- New Zealand Car of the Year
- Northern Irish Car of the Year.

As the Northern Irish Car of the Year, the Mazda 6 was chosen by a panel of journalists from the Ulter Motoring Writers Association, beating Lexus and Honda to take the title. Mazda 6 also took top honors in the Family Car category.

'What Car?' award

Last year, the Mazda 6 was awarded the prestigious Scottish Car of the Year and was a runner-up in the European Car of the Year category. The "What Car?" award is the first for 2003 and is considered one of the most prestigious awards in the automotive industry.

The Mazda 6 was cited for its fine chassis, strong and gutsy engine, build quality and unique "Karakuri" seat function and residual values. "What Car?" specifically identified the Karakuri seat as a major strength as it transforms a roomy family car into a load hauler in a split second.

"The Mazda 6 really is a brilliant car and the awards it is winning just demonstrate that the car is being universally recognized as a class leader," said Rob Lindley, Mazda Motors UK marketing director. "To get the recognition of a 'What Car?' award is a real boost for the Mazda 6 and we are delighted to receive this prestigious honor."

Top 5-star ratings

In addition, the Mazda 6 received top 5-star ratings from the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for both the driver and front seat passenger. The 5-star rating indicates there is a 10 percent or less chance of a serious injury in a 35-mph frontal crash.

The Mazda 6 was designed to offer a fun and pleasurable driving experience not found in many other family cars. It also offers some of the sporty heritage of the Mazda MX-5.

> The Mazda 6 really is a brilliant car and the awards it is winning just show the car is being universally recognized as a class leader

Shocks, it's that sporty spring

By Tessa R. Salazar

THROWING up would be the last thing on my mind while driving at high speed in a racing circuit. And puking would be unimaginable if your companion driver were no less than top F3 racer and 2002 Le Mans Classic Cup winner Angelo Barreto.

Yes, he's that dude in the TV ad zooming on the track and the Internet using the PLDT myDSL, and I was with him on the day he made short work of a stock BMW Series 3 (using standard springs and shocks), mercilessly stretching the car's limits on tight hairpin turns at the Carmona track.

But with only an hour of sleep the night before and nursing a slight fever, I almost did throw up in my seat. My insides were twisting and churning the morning's half-digested hotcakes nearly back out where they came from, and if not for the encouragement of another F3 racer JP Tuason, wife Janet and the rest of the Tuason Racing School team, I wouldn't have been able to force the cakes down.

Improving ride features

My stomach was a bit more pacified when I rode the BMW 5-series, with its suspension race tuned with sports spring and sports shocks courtesy of H&R. Driven by Heinz Remmen, professional race car driver who raced the Porsche Super Cup and Enduro races, the upgraded springs improved on certain ride features, particularly during sharp curves at high speed. Less body roll was felt, and there was less understeer. Dipping forward, or nosediving, during hard breaking was absent.

I was told, thereafter, that sports springs and shocks weren't necessarily only for the racing circuits. On the contrary, these were mainly designed for street use. The enhancements could still be felt in regular road conditions on regular street drives.

For Filipino car owners looking for advanced levels of handling and chassis dynamics, H&R could be the suspension components they need.

Arvin Lim, president of Makna Marketing Corp., the local distributor of H&R, said the appearance and enhanced ride performance would appeal to aggressive drivers who want the appeal of the lowered look and the intimidating big wheels.

Comfy sports springs?

Made using a special steel wire with higher tensile strength allowing for smaller wire diameter, the H&R sports spring translates to better ride comfort—something not normally associated with sports springs. For some applications, not only improved handling results but even better ride comfort than the original, as well.

H&R brings in a weighty portfolio. Not just your ordinary sports spring and shocks maker, it has been associated with motorsport test racing, and has been an exclusive supplier of the German DTM series—the Formula 1 of touring cars. H&R is also a technology partner of Ford Motorsport in the World Rally Championship, supplying components to the 2003 Ford Focus WRC and Turner BMW Motorsports in the United States.

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The rise and rise of BMW

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

EVER since Munich-based BMW opened its Manila subsidiary in April 2001, it has been increasing sales volume year on year. Last month, BMW captured 62 percent of the luxury car segment, up from only 25 percent in 2000, proving its marketing savvy. As of last week, BMW had delivered a total of 635 cars for a 10 percent increase over the year-ago period, thus fueling projections of surpassing the 685 total Philippine sales during 2002.

Much of BMW's success can be attributed to BMW Philippines Corp. president Mark Gilbert. At a lunch with selected motoring journalists last week, Gilbert revealed that BMW posted record sales of 100 units in October, thanks mainly to the revised Automotive Excise Tax Law. "This was a huge leap from the previous month, when the company only sold 44 units," Gilbert said.

Gilbert admitted that the automotive industry went through a period of uncertainty while the Excise Tax Law was being amended. But when the new rules were finalized and implemented, the market reacted positively as car manufacturers were able to lower their prices. For instance, the suggested retail prices (SRPs) of the top-of-the-line BMW 7 Series models were reduced by 30 to 50 percent while the SRP of the entry-level 316 sedan went down to P1.6 million from P1.72 million. "We now offer more competitive prices that are often even lower than gray market imports," Gilbert asserted.

All-new 5 series

Gilbert cited customer demand for the all-new BMW 5 Series as another contributing factor. The new 530d featuring BMW's innovative common rail diesel technology is selling briskly, ditto the new 325i Executive and 325i M Sport. Since the launch of the all-new 5 Series this year, Gilbert said, 36,970 units have already been sold all over the world, contributing greatly to BMW's over-all growth compared to 2002. As of October 2003, the BMW Group had sold 909,370 BMW and MINI automobiles worldwide, representing a 2 percent increase over the 891,180 vehicles sold in the same period last year. BMW (excluding MINI) sales worldwide in the first 10 months of 2003 already stood at 757,800 units or nearly equal to the 771,090 units sold during the entire year of 2002.

Aside from the lower SRPs resulting from the revised Excise Tax Law, BMW's financing promos in cooperation with Security Bank have also pushed up sales. Until Dec. 15, brand-new BMW 325i Executives (P2,750,000 each), 318i Limousines (P1,900,000) and 318i Executives (P2,250,000) are being offered at 50 percent down and zero interest over a 40-month payment term. Other brand-new 3 Series models can be purchased at 40 percent down and zero interest for 24 months.

For those who can't afford a brand-new BMW, Gilbert says that BMW is the only carmaker in the country selling used cars backed by a 12-month or 20,000-km BMW Factory Warranty, whichever comes first. Prestige Cars BMW Makati offers BMW Certified Pre-Owned cars at 50 percent down and zero interest and also accepts BMW trade-ins. "For every four BMW cars sold this year, one was a used car," Gilbert said. "Next year, perhaps it will be one in every three." As they say, sometimes brand is more important than new when you consider BMW's heritage.

BMW 545I

BMW 5 Series

BMW armor

Incidentally, the deteriorating peace and order situation has created a demand for BMW "security cars." Unlike other brands, the armoring of a BMW is done during the manufacturing process in such strict confidentiality that only a few BMW employees with high security clearances would know that you got a security car. Because the armoring is built-in, Gilbert claims that a BMW security car looks, performs, drives and weighs the same as any other nonsecurity BMW of the same make and model and of course, the manufacturer's warranty is not voided.

Ever the marketing man, Gilbert advises those who can afford a BMW to buy now before prices go up. "Clearly, a BMW is not for everyone, but those who can own one, should," he stressed. Even before the peso plunged to P55.60:US$1 last Friday after Finance Secretary Isidro Camacho resigned, BMW was planning to increase prices by 5 percent in January to accommodate the fluctuations in the peso-Euro exchange rate. At the time we met with Gilbert, the exchange rate was already P65 per Euro.

Despite all these, Gilbert looks forward to a good year in 2004 when BMW will bring in the X-3 and more 5-Series variants with the 6 Series and the 1 Series not far behind. "Our product range is very fresh, our dealers have a new feel and look—we're opening a branch in Alabang next year—and we offer attractive financing packages," Gilbert concluded. "BMW is simply a premium brand interested in looking after its customers."

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: If they don't have chocolate in heaven, I ain't going.

Formula One car displayed at Duty Free

FORMULA One enthusiasts had a chance of a lifetime when the Renault Mild Seven F1 car was displayed recently at the Duty Free Philippines. This is in line with the tobacco company's quest to bring the exhilarating sports to the Philippines.

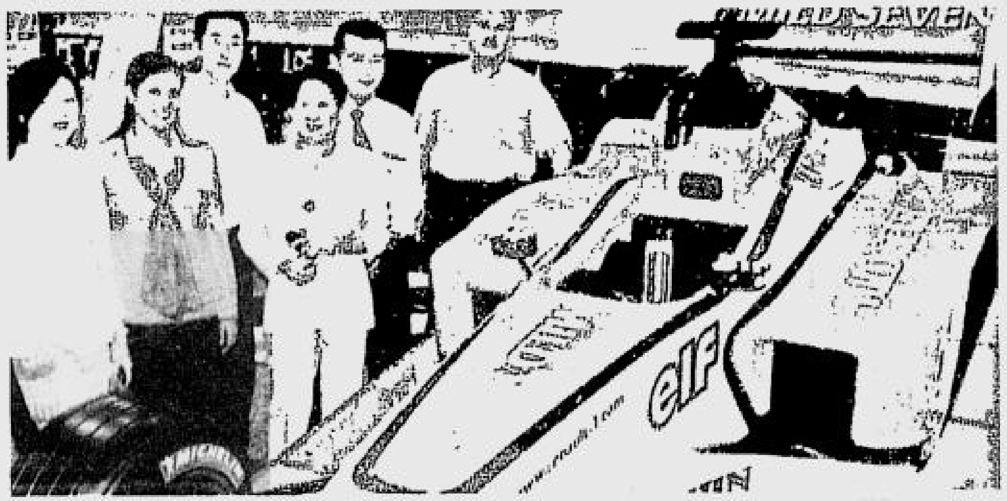
For a period of two weeks, racecar fanatics and Duty Free shoppers alike had the chance to have their photographs taken with the sleek, mean driving machine that is the Renault R23 Mild Seven F1 car. This car is the same one that the dynamic duo of Jarno Trulli and Fernando Alonso, both of the increasingly popular blue and yellow Renault Mild Seven Team, run up to 320 kilometers per hour.

The Renault R23 engine can be revved up beyond 18,000 rpm. Its engine produces sparks and completes 300 piston cycles in one second.

But the machine is half of the story. The other half is the athlete.

The Renault R23 gave Alonso, the 22-year-old Spaniard, his first taste of victory at the Hungarian Grand Prix a few months ago. He is Spain's biggest ever-motor racing talent and is touted to take over the reigns and dominate over the older generation of F1 athletes.

Alonso's team mate, Trulli is ranked fifth in the world, a rank made in the most recent Suzuka, Japan Grand Prix. Trulli's rise to racing prominence seems meteoric.



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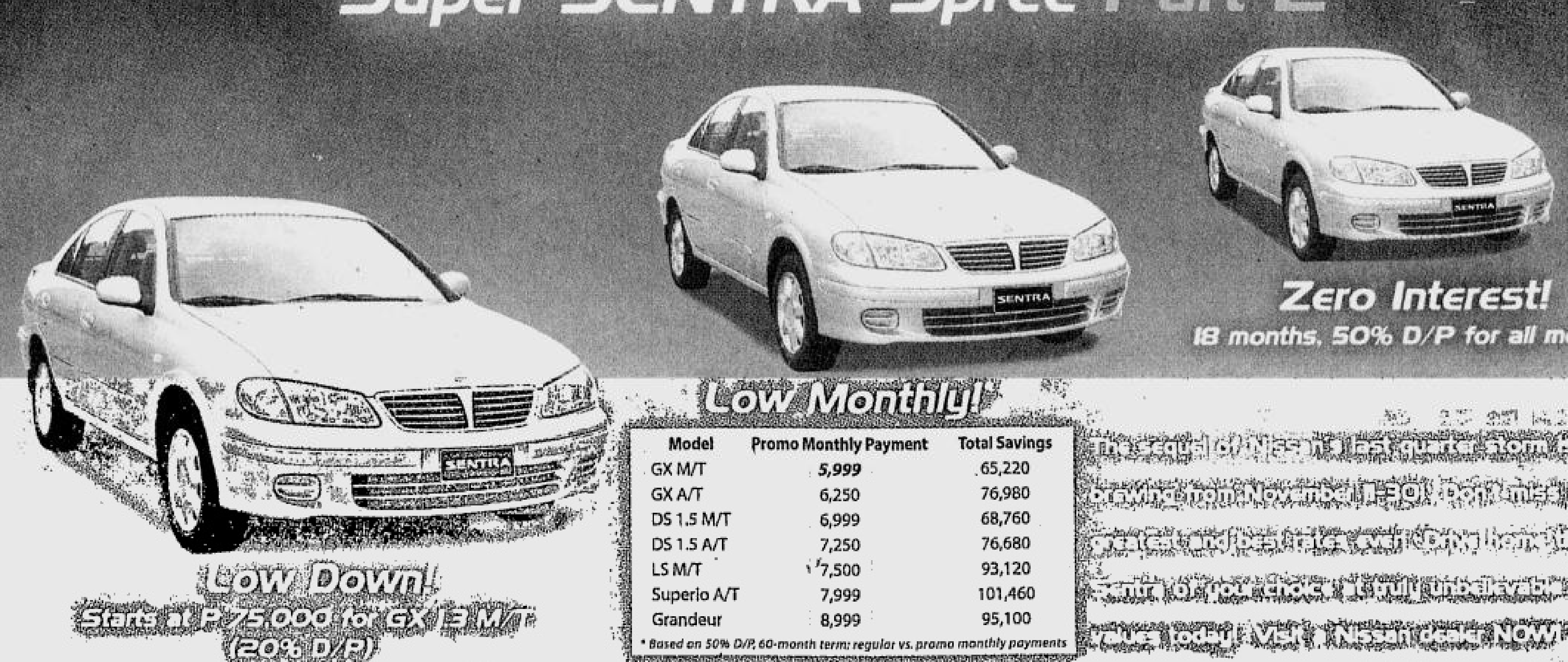

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Superio A/T	7,999	101,460
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Peza extends special eco zone status to entire Toyota complex

By Charles E. Buban

TOYOTA Motor Philippines Corp. announced last week its readiness to step up the local automotive parts industry's export capacity.

This developed after the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) extended TMP's special economic zone status to cover the entire 77 hectares of the Toyota Industrial Complex in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, following a proclamation issued by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

TMP's special economic zone status previously covers only 25 hectares of the Laguna facility.

"The expansion reinforces the TMP commitment to establish the Philippines as a major automotive operations base in Asia," revealed TMP president Nobuharu Tabata in a speech during the ceremony, which was attended by Peza director general Lilia de Lima and officials from both TMP and Toyota Japan.

Increasing export capacity

"With the expansion of our special economic zone status, we can now fulfill our commitment to develop local auto parts industry through export to the global supply chain of Toyota," assured Tabata.

"We will soon be seeing the formation and expansion of suppliers and parts makers network that will further reinforce Toyota's global supply chain," he added.

TMP vice chair Antonio S. Abacan Jr. revealed the expansion of the economic zone status will open an array of opportunities for investors to partake of the benefits offered by the government.

"For employment alone, we envision that this Toyota economic zone will generate no less than 3,000 workers by the year 2005," he said.

The Toyota Industrial Complex is currently the Philippine base of operations for such locator-members of the Toyota group of suppliers such as Toyota Autoparts Philippines, Tokai Rika Phils. and Philippine HKR.

Unprecedented level

Toyota Motor Corp. (Japan) managing officer Akira Okabe said export earnings from automotive parts and components made in the country and sold abroad have grown significantly.

"In the Philippines, exports of parts and components to the Toyota global network will reach an unprecedented level of more than $350 million (P19.45 billion)," Okabe revealed as he encouraged parts makers to increase localization and to increase exports.

He assured that the Philippines will become a key base for Toyota production not just in the Southeast Asian region but also globally.

Complementation

Toyota has created an intraregional complementation system in the Southeast Asian region 10 years ago to establish the necessary economies of scale by specializing in production of major functional components such as engines, transmissions, body panels, cooling system and other components.

"The concept of this network is to enjoy scale merits, considering the whole Southeast Asia as one region for automobile production and supply base," explained Okabe.

Toyota vehicles are now sold in more than 160 countries around the globe, and it has 46 production bases spread in 26 countries and locations, making it the third biggest auto manufacturer in the world following General Motors and Ford.

Global Vision 2010

"We have set our 'Global Vision 2010' aiming to gain 15 percent of the world's market share by the early part of this decade," Okabe announced.

"In this effort, Asean will play a significant role having a very promising market in the region and we can only achieve this by strengthening our overseas production and global procurement capability," he said.

For the Philippines, this means additional investment amounting to P3.34 billion will be put in place in the next two years.

Agassi's baby now here in RP

By Charles E. Buban

NEW kid on the 4x4 block

FOR MANY months we could only watch on cable channel commercials the beauty of this new sports utility vehicle from Kia.

Well, the wait is over as the SUV that American tennis icon Andre Agassi hurtles in the commercial has finally arrived in the Philippines.

"Sorento will surely make a dramatic impact on the 4x4 market here," assured COO Minoru Tanaka of Columbian Autocar Corp., local distributor of this Kia sports-utility vehicle.

In fact, the Sorento is Kia's top selling car in 2003. With 82,675 sales worldwide, it is among the Korean carmaker's top export seller, together with the Rio and the Carnival/Sedona.

Mid-size sport-utility

Named after a city in Italy, the Sorento is an all-new mid-size SUV that is good enough to buy on its own merit.

It packs a big V6 engine, seats five with lots of elbow room, and "will embark anywhere its rivals will go, especially off-road," promised Tanaka.

But what really sets the Sorento apart is its price: at P1.38 million, this SUV will surely attract anyone looking for greater power, more leg and head room.

"It is also this reason we had to delay its introduction here as we waited for the excise tax issues to settle down. We want the Sorento to be priced competitively," said marketing manager Hernando Gañac.

Loaded with features

The Sorento comes loaded with features. Leather seats, electrically heated rear window, power side mirrors and windows, CD audio system with eight speakers, front and rear cupholders, tilt adjustable steering wheel, over head multimeter, overhead bin, 2-story glove compartment, 12-volts power sockets, passenger under seat storage box and front seatback mesh storage nets are standard.

Its 3.5-liter 24-valve double overhead-cam V6 engine powers is mated to an electronically controlled four-speed automatic transmission and a 4-wheel drive part-time rotating button type drivetrain.

The Sorento's powerplant is rated to deliver 197 ps of power and 30.1 kg-m of torque, which gives it a 1,589 kg towing capacity, enough to pull your extra gears with ease.

Like all Kia models, the Sorento will be covered by Kia's industry—leading 3 years/110,000 km product warranty.

Sturdy body on frame

The Sorento has sturdy body-on-frame construction, which means this SUV will not creak, groan or rattle when crawling over body-twisting trails.

Kia designers have made the Sorento unique. It has a two-tone treatment with lower body cladding in a contrasting color while out back, Kia managed to do something different with the taillights, circular with dots of red in a spoke-like pattern.

Anyone who takes the Sorento seriously off road will appreciate the SUV's short front and rear overhangs.

From the rear, the Sorento has distinctively broad shoulders, thanks to a shoulder line that steps out and sweeps around the tailgate.

Interior features

The interior of the Sorento is highlighted by an overhead console that offers sunglasses storage, map lights and a garage door opener pocket.

It also has a display that provides readouts for outside temperature, compass, altitude and for weather buffs, barometric pressure.

The rear seat flips and folds 60/40 to form a flat floor with a cargo capacity of 1.99 cubic meters with the rear seat folded. With the seat raised, there's 0.94 cubic meters of cargo room.

The cargo area is accessible through the hatch, or through the rear glass window. There's another storage area under the cargo area floor. A cargo cover comes standard.

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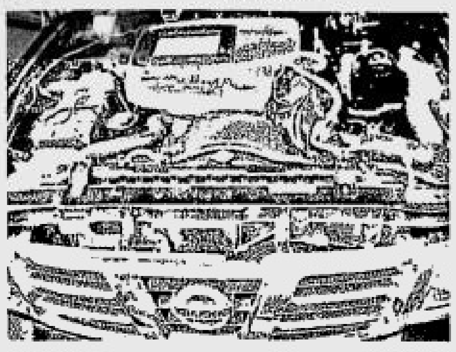
THE BEHEMOTH comes in like Godzilla merging with the other dinosaurs on Edsa



POWER under the hood

Politicians' SUV for the campaign trail

Text by Tessa R. Salazar
Photos by Alex P. Loinaz

ELECTIONS are near. And so are the campaign sorties—the "reaching-out-to-you-can-you-feel-the-sincerity-and-warmth-of-my-handshake" house-to-house getting-to-know-the-*masa* gimmick. Whatever.

On that long road to the poll booth, the politicians' choice of an SUV for the campaign trail really isn't as tough as the campaign itself. When you ask your regular pedicab driver which SUV he would most likely give way to, he would answer, with the glint of fear in his eye, "Nissan Patrol," because the Nissan Patrol has always been associated with politicians and their bodyguards.

Universal Motors Corp., assembler and distributor of Nissan SUVs—the popular Frontier pickups, and the Patrol—recognizes this image, of course. And though UMC doesn't have in its hands the exact number of politicos in the halls of both Houses of Congress who own a Patrol, it figures it doesn't need a quorum to transmit this image and reinforce it further on the selling block.

Awe-inspiring

"Panindak" (awe-inspiring) is how a Nissan Patrol looks like. With an overall length of 5,010 mm, an overall width of 1,930 mm and an overall height of 1,855 mm, it indeed comes in like Godzilla merging with the other dinosaurs on Edsa. The "shock" value is complete with a siren ("*wang-wang*" to Mr. Pedicab Driver), and a retinue of swerving motorcycle police patrols. Now that is the ultimate "road raid," able to part bumper-to-bumper traffic like what Moses did to the Red Sea.

Its looks complement its driven passengers—aggressive-looking multireflector headlights and taillights, built in fog lamps, a 16-inch Bronx II chrome magwheels, a dominant fascia with a bold radiator grille, and red button signal lights on the side view mirrors.

We test drove one such black Patrol automatic transmission for a spin a few weeks ago in Tagaytay. Driving it gave even ordinary mortals like us that "important" feeling, indeed. Unfortunately, it wasn't the powerful Patrol six-cylinder in-line, 4.5-L engine version, the one most commonly bought by those who bulletproof their vehicles for protection against rifle assaults.

> The 'toy for the House boy' we were romping around with was a 4x2 Patrol with a 3-liter engine, direct overhead camshaft, 4-cylinder, in-line engine type

Its "political rival" Mitsubishi Pajero has the same height, but what tilts the vote in favor of the Patrol is the imposing height and width. The Pajero can only muster 4,830 mm in length and 1,895 mm in width.

The Patrol has a wheelbase of 2,970 mm, longer than the Pajero's 2,780 mm.

The "toy for the House boy" we were romping around with was a 4x2 Patrol with a 3-liter engine, direct overhead camshaft, four-cylinder, in-line engine type. Regardless of the less "oomph," this version still owns bragging rights. Maybe this would do for a councilor or vice mayor.

Handling was apt and much appreciated as soon as we negotiated the winding roads to Tagaytay. The pan hard, a lateral rod at the back of the vehicle, handles the sideward movement of the differential—the reason for the good handling.

Surprisingly, this SUV's horn wasn't as blaring as its looks, which was good. We weren't politicians, so we didn't need to blow our horns even if there wasn't a soul on the road to block our path.

No major surge

The engine is called ZD30DDTi with a max power of 155 horsepower over 3,600 revolution per minute, a max torque of 354 Newton meters over 2,000 rpm.

We didn't feel the "pull" too much—the transition from acceleration to turbo boost being not that distinguishable. We were expecting the feel of an increase in torque. In this case, the pull was flat, from the start to the shiftpoint. We figured that either the turbo kicked in at a low rpm range (at perhaps 2,200), we couldn't notice it anymore.

We expected cat-like reflexes despite the body bulk because of the size of the engine and its turbo components. Maybe the 5-speed manual transmission would respond better.

Firm vs 'boaty'

The 3-link coil-type front suspension and the 5-link coil-type rear suspension gives that taut, firm ride, especially in front. If you have pending *"mga bilbil"* (love handles) in your midsection, they will oscillate. The ride will be enjoyable to a younger generation who hate that "boaty" ride and want the feel of the road.

UMC tech guy Rolly Malabuyoc said that contrary to what I've experienced, the coil-type suspension as compared to other suspension types, should have a better riding comfort because this could easily absorb road bumps with its vertical absorption.

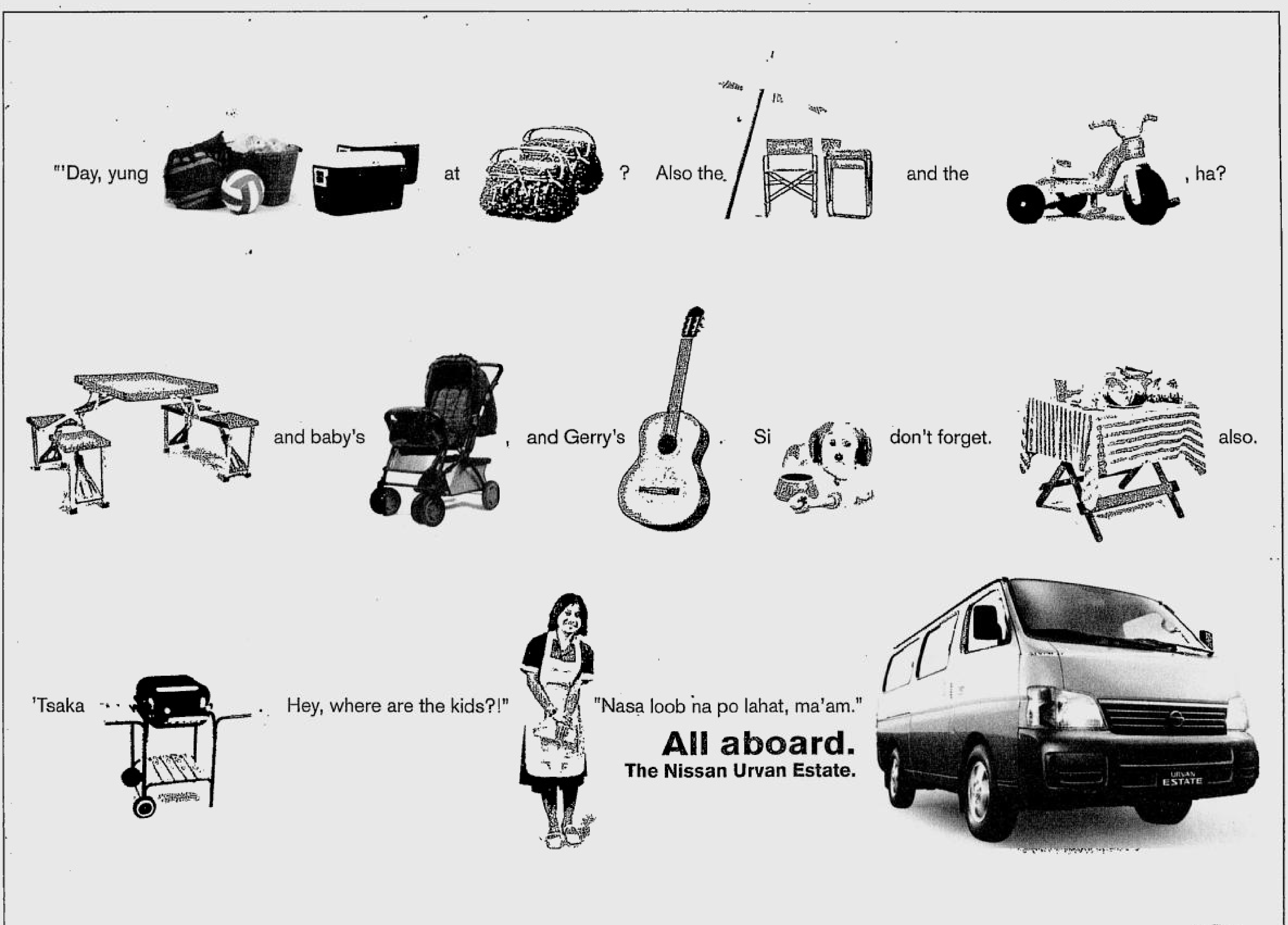
Anyway, the feel of this ride is that the entire differential is being dribbled.

But hey, who can argue with a politician who insists he wants the "feel" and pulse of the down-to-earth *"masa"* even when riding on an elite Patrol?

Verdict: At P2.220 million, your SWS ratings automatically rise up. No flood or roadblock can ever separate you from your voting public (its manual diesel is priced at P2.120 million).

And with a ground clearance of 215 mm, no roadblock can stop your escape from enemies, as well. If you're a vice mayor moving up, you'd be all right in the 3-liter Patrol. But if you have Malacañang in mind, the six-cylinder in-line 4.5-L Patrol (gasoline) at P2.315 million will earn you a PSG (Presidential Security Group) salute at the main gate. As for getting the people's vote, better practice your handshake-and-smile routine 50 million times in front of your vanity mirror.

FROM THE HALLS of both Houses of Congress to the jungles of Tagaytay



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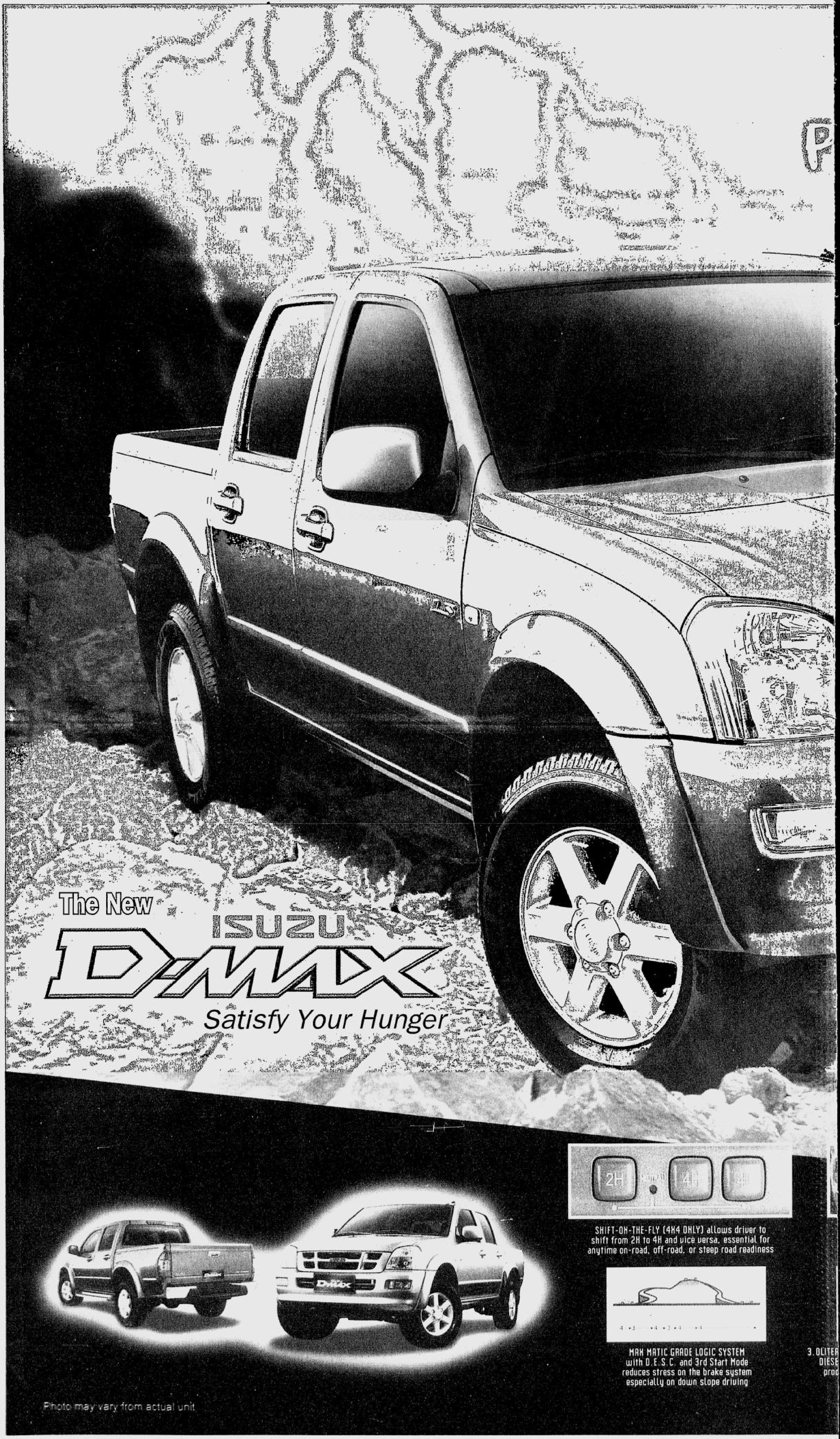
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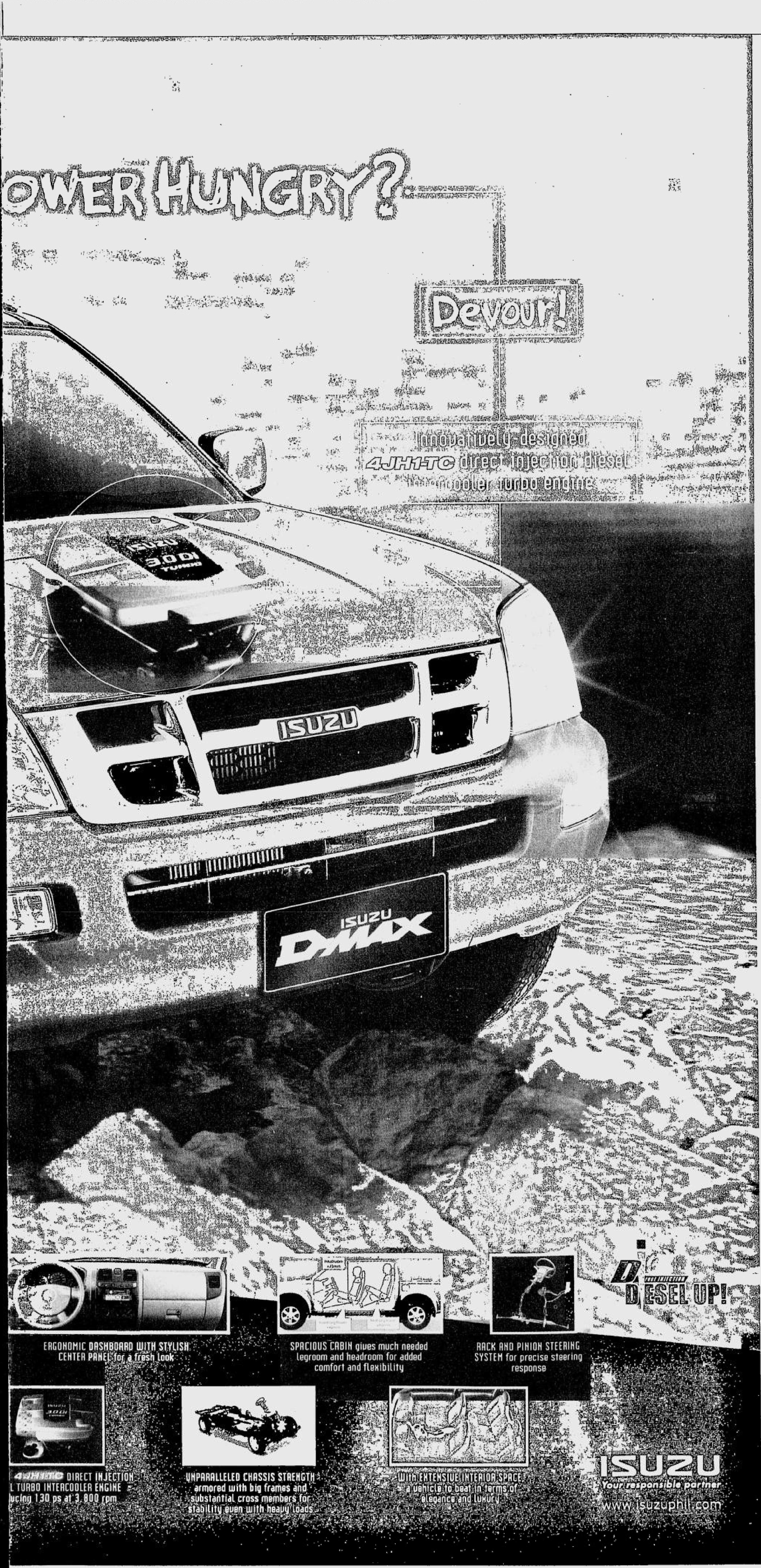
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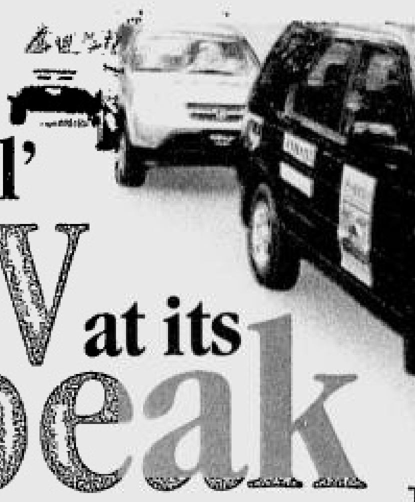
The 'real' CR-V at its peak



THE CR-V convoy kept moving, climbing and rushing through dense fog

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE PEOPLE of Honda Motors Philippines recently cooked up an activity that introduced the sequel to the original 4WD CR-V to the local motoring media. And boy, did the itinerary read like an action-packed sequel to "Indiana Jones."

We were to drive the new real time 4WD CR-Vs up to the very heart of Mountain Province, drive amid landslide-prone areas, trundle over road repairs, deep puddles, negotiate hair pin turns and tight corners, frolic on the muddy tracks, and tiptoe on one-lane rickety wooden bridges.

And that we just did, and it just made four-wheel driving edgy but fun. To add more theatrical drama to the event, our hardy expedition (ahem, pardon the allusion to a 4x2 SUV by another manufacturer) was pushed and pulled by typhoon "Weng." We were waiting for Steven Spielberg to shout "cut!" after every turn.

But this event was for real, and the CR-V we were risking our dry clothes on was a return to the original 4WD CR-V, made even better, perhaps. So the Manila-Baguio-Benguet-Baguio-Manila route was meant to prove that the new real-time 4WD CR-V was stronger than ever.

When driving isn't fun

Admittedly though, driving in the rain, with winds lashing at your car from every direction at 5,000 feet ASL (above sea level) and higher up in the cold mountain ridges isn't any fun, unless you're as crazy as motoring journalists ignoring our family members' pleas to stay in for the storm. Our convoy of CR-Vs kept on moving, climbing even higher, rushing through dense fog most of the time.

Unlike the other 4WD system (some models have another smaller shifting lever to engage the rear wheels, or the all-time 4WD, that is always engaged even though not needed), the real-time 4WD engages only when it is needed. Honda engineers intend to make a more user-friendly 4WD that does not require additional skill to operate. And, it also disengages automatically. No need to think on when to use the 4WD or 2WD system.

From Baguio, we made our way via the scenic Halsema Highway up to Atok and then up Mt. Data in Bauko, Mountain Province where—we couldn't believe our eyes—a hotel stood (Mt. Data Hotel).

It was on this route that we almost didn't notice that we were already on the highest highway in the country. At 7,400 feet ASL, Km 53 in Cattubo (Atok), where the likes of Abiang Burial Caves are found, we were literally driving in the clouds.

Occasional 'twitches'

"Weng" had already been lashing the sky black and blue even while we were in Pangasinan en route to Camp John Hay Manor Hotel in Baguio, but the CR-V seemed to pooh-pooh the weather. I did feel occasional "twitches" on the steering wheel while I maneuvered the slopes in Baguio.

Honda tech guy Noel Umpad said occasional twitches felt were the switching or engaging of the system from 2WD to 4WD. The 4WD system is activated by the difference in wheel rotation between the front and the rear wheels. It disengages automatically when wheel rotation is the same or during braking.

The highlight of the trip, undoubtedly, was the climb up perpetually foggy Mt. Data itself, and the discovery of a hotel on top—probably the greatest marketing move of all in these parts.

Mt. Data Hotel is a magnificent spot to view the sun rising over the Cordillera range—if you were lucky enough to wake up that early and find no fog. The cozy fireplace (if there is fire, of course) invites those who relax in its warmth to a game of chess or a traditional Bontoc massage, perhaps. The restless can use the hotel as a jump-off point to Sagada.

Unfortunately, though, our contingent stayed in the hotel just for lunch. After chow, we descended and the typhoon's winds blew stronger.

Still, the CR-V's steering proved true and firm, but light enough for women drivers like me. Everything the driver needed was within reach. The steering wheel was a delight to hold, while the cupholders in the middle were convenient.

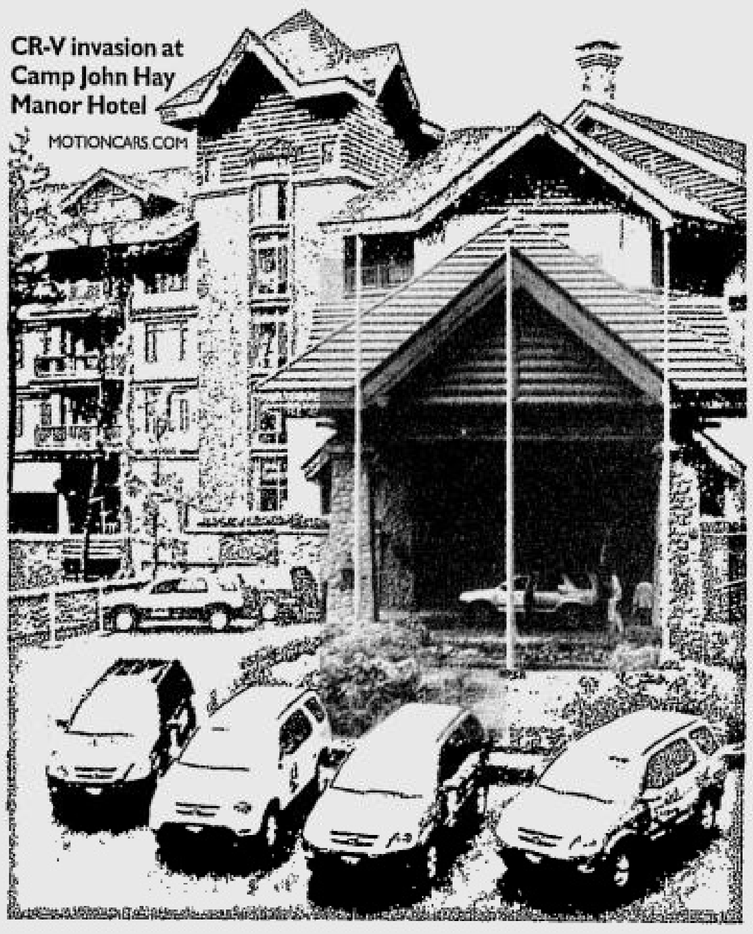
The CR-V wanted more. The strength of the 2-liter light-bodied SUV with 4x4-capabilities devoured the mountain roads.

The roads up in Benguet and Mountain Province are alternately well-paved and rough—some to the point of being 4x4 rough, but the CR-V handled all the terrains with flair and confidence, and it reflected in the relaxed atmosphere within the passenger compartments of the SUVs.

Though the tires weren't really for the heavy-duty four-wheel drive, none of these were punctured during the entire trip. The tires were Bridgestone, 205/70 R15, designed really for paved roads but could handle off-road driving condition.

The serious driving stuff, the warnings and advisories and other policies for this risky trip, were ably handled by the Roadwise professional drivers, who maintained lead car status all the time.

At the end of the trip, the titanium white CR-Vs looked more chocolate brown, what with all the mud and rain they went through. We, however, came out of the storm and down the mountain all smiles and still squeaky clean.



CR-V invasion at Camp John Hay Manor Hotel

MOTIONCARS.COM

Crazy rule; the latest from NLE's Ping

Full Tank

Al Mendoza

THE CRAZIEST traffic rule in town is the one that empowers the MMDA men and traffic cops to penalize a motorist for driving a vehicle that does not have a plate number.

I ask you: Who doesn't want his own vehicle to have a plate number?

Only vehicle thieves would want that.

* * *

Time and again, I get complaints from motorists denouncing traffic cops of blatant arrogance and, in worst cases, mulcting practices due to vehicles not having plate numbers.

It's crazy because, in the first place, it's not the motorist's fault that his vehicle does not have a plate number. It's basically the LTO's.

In the second place, motorists with their vehicles not having plate numbers have papers to prove they own the vehicle and their acquisition of a plate number is still being processed at the LTO.

In short, motorists are being pestered, bothered and mulcted for a nontraffic violation, all because of that crazy rule deputizing MMDA men and *"kotong"* cops to flag down motorists driving vehicles without plate numbers.

Abuses—they are all over.

* * *

There are still critics of the ongoing rehabilitation of the Northern Luzon Expressway but they have become isolated cases.

Here's a bit of good news regarding that. Hopefully by this time of year next year, traffic and congestion along the NLE will no longer exist. The Manila North Tollways Corp., which is at the spearhead of the expansion and rehabilitation program for the NLE, has renewed its commitment to deliver a new and ultra modern expressway on or before the end of next year.

When completed, the new NLE will have three new interchanges in Marilao, Angeles and Mexico. Ten existing exchanges will also be widened and improved. Two new flyovers in Balintawak-Novaliches and Dau will also be built.

* * *

From no less than Ping de Jesus himself, the main man of this gargantuan rehabilitation project, this new update on the NLE expansion and rehabilitation:

First, new toll barriers and an increased number of booths will be placed in Balintawak, Bocaue and Dau. The Tabang toll barrier and the new and existing toll plazas will also be expanded and improved.

Other major improvements will include the addition of an electronic toll system to guarantee faster entrances and exits. This involves the installation of electronic curtains to ensure the correct classification and toll charges of vehicles.

Aside from the improved toll system, motorists can also expect new features that will promote safety and comfort on the road.

* * *

One of the greatest fears of motorists is being caught in the middle of nowhere with no help in sight. Couple that with torrential rain and you have a tragedy waiting to happen.

To assure the safety and convenience of all motorists and commuters, the NLE will be equipped with modern call boxes in specific emergency parking areas. These parking areas will be separated by a mere kilometer on crucial stretches and just two kilometers in areas experiencing fewer vehicular traffic.

Motorists in need of assistance will merely need to pull over and pick up a call box's receiver. An information officer in the NLE's Operations Management Center (OMC) will be ready to answer the call and deploy the necessary support services. The OMC will be the endpoint of information coming from various parts of the NLE.

Keep on punching, Ping!

Ping de Jesus, that is.

* * *

Honda's last quarter blast has been going great guns. Launched on Nov. 6, Civic buyers are having a hey day on bargain packages through the participation of BPI Family Bank and RCBC savings bank.

The down payment for the Civic is only P92,000. Isn't that a steal? Also it can be had for as low as P6,408 a month for 72 months after a 50 percent down payment.

Honda has also introduced the zero interest plan at 12 or 18 monthly installments with only 30-40 percent down payment. For cash-basis buyers, special incentives await them as well.

* * *

The new Honda Civic, already the recipient of numerous awards and recognition, is now the seventh generation and its ingenuity and innovation are yet to be surpassed, if not equaled, by its main rivals. Its technologically advanced 3-stage VTEC engine has been the envy of many.

The Civic is available in 1.5 LXi MT or AT, 1.6 VTi MT or AT and 1.6 VTi-S MT or AT. Their colors include red rock pearl, silverstone metallic and aqua green, in addition to the popular dark emerald green, tafetta white and zircon blue. Exclusive colors include mulberry pink, savannah green, circuit blue and night hawk black. All Civic variants come with a cost-saving 3-year warranty (or 100,000 kilometers) as standard.

Buyers are also offered the VIP (Value Insurance Program). For more details, log on to www.hondaphil.com.

* * *

Mitsubishi has recently staged with much success its new SUVs—the Outlander and Pajero. Held at the Fort Bonifacio Global City, the Mitsubishi Fun Camp drew a mammoth crowd of car buffs all excited to see the latest from Mitsubishi.

Said Mitsubishi Motors Philippines' senior manager for marketing services Froilan Dytianquin: "I'm glad that everybody enjoyed our outdoor motor show. We did our best to really satisfy our customers and we are glad to achieve our expectations. Our profuse gratitude to the motoring public."

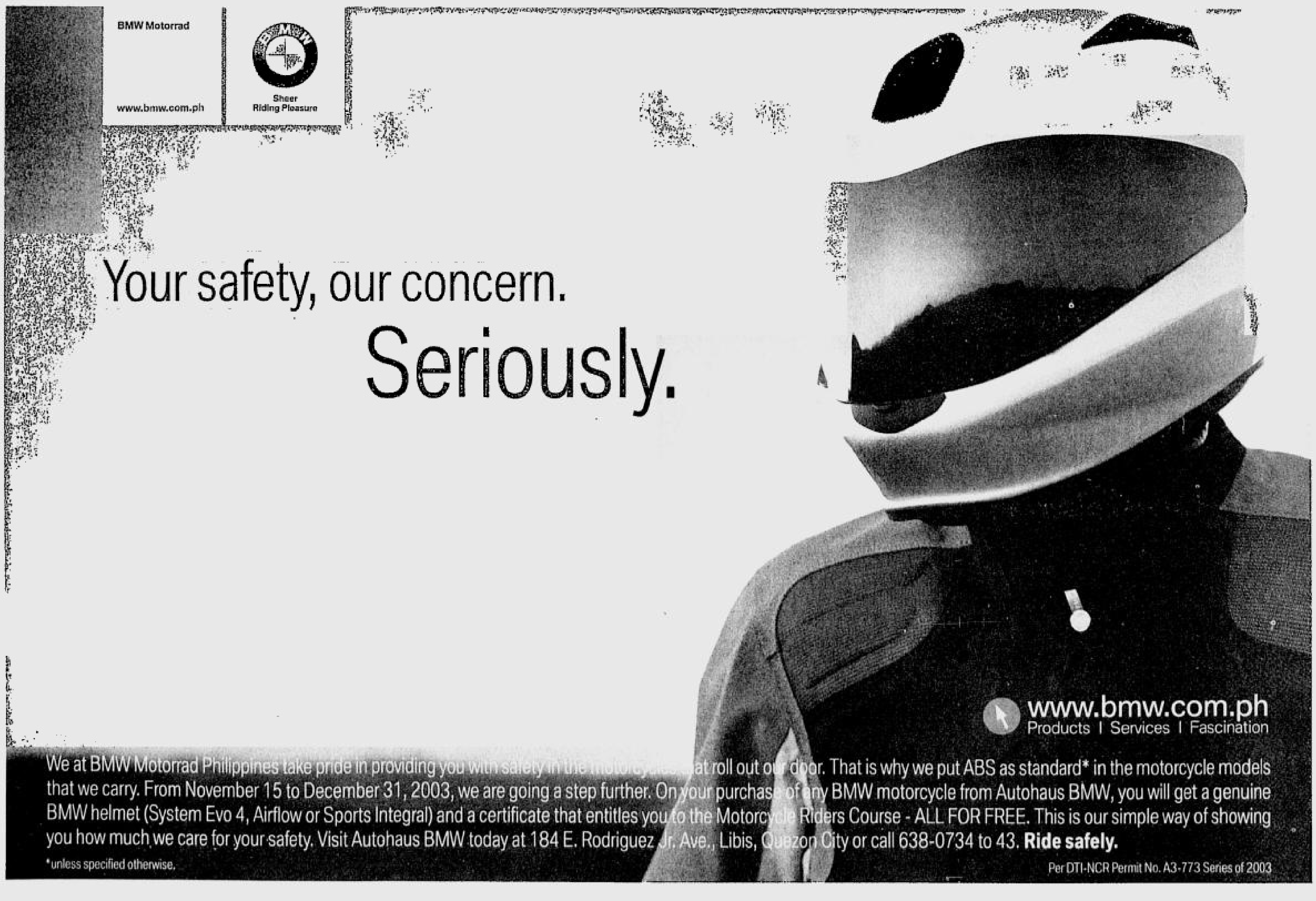
It can be recalled that Mitsubishi Motors Philippines was also a pioneer in setting up the Mitsubishi Motorworld in 1997 which was an exclusive motor show event that gathered Mitsubishi's premium vehicles to the delight of the country's motorists.

* * *

PUBLIC SERVICE. Chevrolet Pasig is offering an after-sales Christmas treat to its customers, according to general manager Raul Evangelista. Raul said Chevrolet Pasig is offering a shuttle service for customers wishing to do shopping at malls located in the area. "While waiting for their families to do Christmas shopping, they can relax at our customers lounge," he said. Raul also said he is offering a foreign-trained team to service Chevrolet owners at big discounts. His office is located at C5 Automotive Row, with telephone numbers 672-1615, 672-1484 and 672-1612.

* * *

QUOTE ME. Walk some more, park your car a little farther from malls this Christmas. Walking is still the best exercise.



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*unless specified otherwise.

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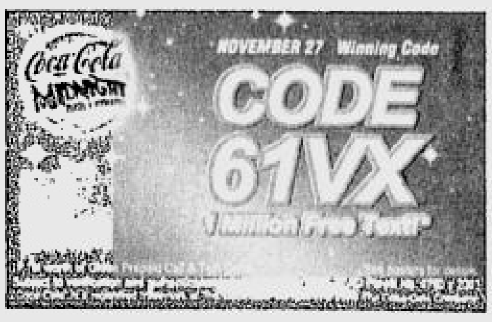

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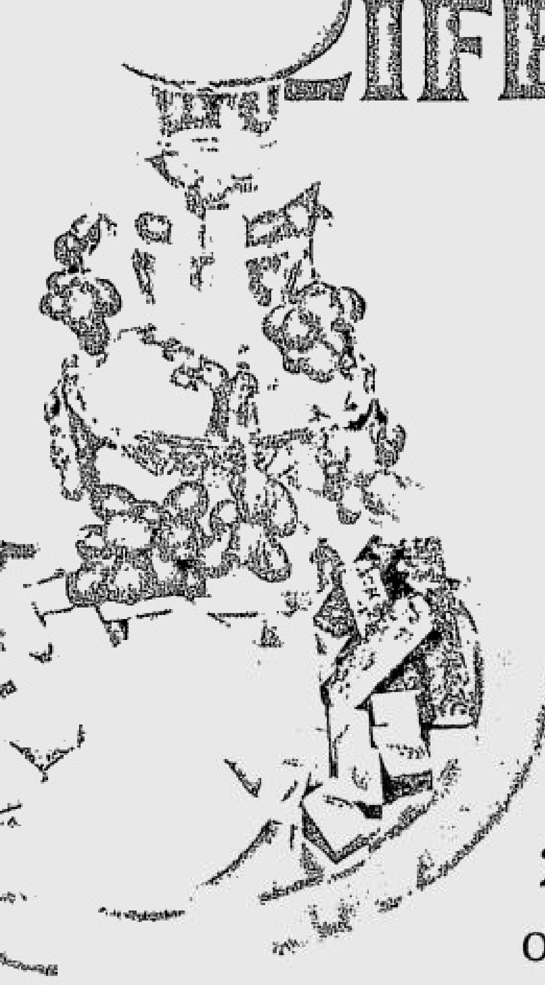
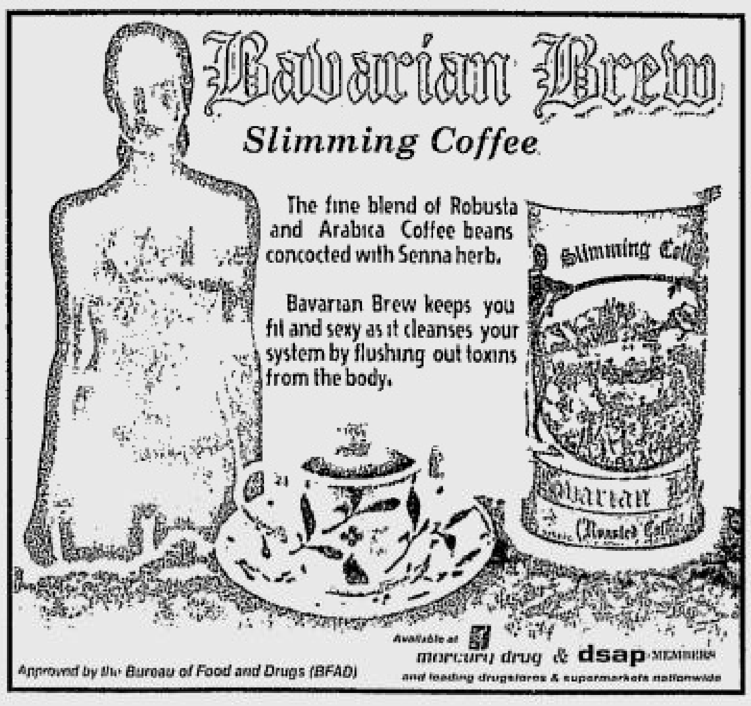


"BACCHUS Says Cheese!" The grand prize features a cheese carving of the god of wine, accented with grapes and chunks of cheese either wrapped in Japanese nori or dusted with sesame seeds, poppy seeds and cinnamon.

Salads and cheeses coming up!

Two competitions at the recent Asian Ethnic Food Fest 2003 tested the culinary flair of amateurs and professionals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Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Egay Montano

CULINARY competitions bring out not just a myriad of flavors but also artistry and creativity, as two recent events showed.

The Queso de Bola Platter and the Trendiest Salad competitions, held during the Asian Ethnic Food Fest 2003 at the World Trade Center, tested the culinary flair of both amateurs and professionals in the food and beverage industry.

The on-the-spot *queso de bola* platter contest paired amateurs with professionals in five teams tasked to come up with designs using cheese courtesy of Marca Piña Queso de Bola.

"This contest aimed to put a festive atmosphere to the food fest," said Nancy Reyes-Lumen, publisher and editor in chief of Cook magazine, which co-sponsored the trade event.

The five pairs were each given three pieces of *queso de bola* to design and an hour to create their platter. Part of the rules was that the decorations and garnishing should not exceed the circumference of the platter and should not be over two feet in height.

The participants brought their own tabletop utensils and edible decorating materials and garnishing, and worked on their cheeses right in front of a live audience.

The teams were judged according to their creativity and design skills, teamwork, neatness and the degree of difficulty involved in their respective designs.

First prize went to Noel Basa and Engelbert Guivencan for their artwork titled "Bacchus Says Cheese," which featured the god of wine and chunks of cheese either wrapped in Japanese nori or dusted with sesame seeds, poppy seeds and powdered cinnamon.

Basa is a kitchen artist at the Hotel Inter-Con while Guivencan is a seaman who simply loves to dabble in the kitchen. The pair took home P5,000 and a gift pack.

Second place went to Christopher Jose and Ruby Ana Victoriano for their depiction of provincial life, highlighted by a unique carving of a cheese *bahay kubo*.

Jose is a bartender and cook at Absinth Bar Resto, while Victoriano is a culinary enthusiast. They pocketed P3,000 and a gift pack.

Third placer was Arturo Molina, who was a last-minute contestant. His "Keso de Bola with Christmas Décor" featured a display of small cheeses carved like Christmas trees. He bagged P2,000 and a gift pack.

The panel of judges included Cely Kalaw of Sinigang Bar and brothers Gabby and Rafael Sun of North Park.

Art of dressing

Another interesting contest that put emphasis on "family togetherness" was the Parent and Child Trendiest Salad Dressing Contest.

"We thought of this activity to foster a special bonding among family members by working together on a certain project," said Reyes-Lumen.

Six pairs competed for the cream-based salad recipe. Judges included chefs, restaurateurs and food enthusiasts, namely, Ed Quimson, Gem Salvador, Nena Reyes, Judy Lao, Rox Cailao and Mervin Whitfield.

The salad entries were judged according to their taste and texture, presentation, recipe and creative use of the salad ingredients.

First placers were Corazon Filarmeo and nephew Paolo Lagniton who came up with "Oriental Pomelo Salad with Plum Dressing."

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New studies on cell phone hazards

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

DON'T use the cellular phone unless it is necessary and exercise caution when using the device. In spite of repeated assurances of the mobile phone industry that cell phones are safe, these devices may pose health threats that are too serious to risk.

This is a warning from the Consumer Protection and Welfare, Inc. (CCPW) which cited studies about cell phone hazards distributed at the recent 17th World Consumers Congress in Lisbon, Portugal. The consumer organization represented the Philippines at the global consumer congress last month.

"What many users don't realize is they are putting a potent transmitter that emits microwave radiation that can affect the body system, especially among children," the CCPW reported. The fact that the direct target of radiation is the human head poses serious health dangers. Children are said to be at greater risk because mobile phone radiation penetrates their skull and brains more readily than adults.

The global studies mentioned possible cell phone sicknesses that included memory loss, Parkinson's disease, impaired immunity, kidney disease, birth defects, cancer and other ailments.

"Unfortunately, the public has no access to the truth about the health risks of mobile phones. Until mobile phones are proven to be safe, consumers should take safety precautions," CCPW advised. For copies of the international scientific studies on possible mobile phone health hazards, e-mail CCPW at vdelfierro@hotmail.com or call 8216417. Also available at CCPW are studies on the health risks posed by radiation from electromagnetic field (radio-TV antenna, electric transmission facilities, microwave, mobile phone antenna, etc.).

New cell-phone sickness

Some months ago, we came across articles on the new cell phone syndrome called "inattention blindness." Studies cited by the Consumer Reports, for example, explained how conversations on phones, whether these were hands-free or hand-held, caused this new kind of "blindness" that could possibly lead to traffic accidents.

Researchers at the University of Utah observed that talking on the cell phone while driving made students "blind" to 50 percent of roadside billboards, and they had trouble remembering which ones they had seen. Researchers also established that use of hands-free phone during simulated highway traffic impaired drivers, causing some rear-end collisions. A report from California Highway Patrol also linked cell phone use while driving to accidents involving 611 drivers during the first six months of year 2002.

Five years ago, the New England Journal of Medicine proved that using a cell phone quadrupled the risk of having an accident. This and other studies led several nations—including Austria, Israel and Italy—to impose restrictions on cell phone use behind the wheel. In the US, some local jurisdictions have ordinances limiting the use of the device while driving.

Consumer complaints

V. Zaballa (carlazaballa@yahoo.com) and her husband went to Sun Shop at SM-North Edsa to avail of a promo that gave away a Nokia 3510 pre-paid phone kit for every approved post-paid subscription, provided they bought one of the handsets listed in the promo. They opted for a Nokia 6310i with Plan 1000. When her application was approved three weeks later, however, she was told by the sales representative that the Nokia 6310i was not available anymore. After consulting her husband, she decided to get the Panasonic GD75. But when she was claiming the unit, she was told that the Nokia 3510 freebie was already out of stock. Moreover, the sales clerk said that the promo was only good while the supply lasted.

Zaballa had asked the sales clerk if they would replace the Nokia 3510. "After all, first it was the 6310i that was out of stock, and now it was the give-away 3510. The sales rep said she would consult her supervisors, then she would call me back. I waited two weeks for naught," she complained.

We called Sun Cellular-SM North branch and was informed by manager Marge Pascual that Sun's front liners were well aware of the promo policy. She explained the promo was only good while the stock lasted. Anyway, she said she would get in touch with V. Zaballa and explain things to her.

J. Muzones of Pasig City wrote: "I bought two bars of Mr. Clean in their new individually cut big bars. When I saw the digital weighing scale at the store, I weighed the two bars separately and found out that each bar weighed 135 grams instead of 140 grams which was specified on the label."

According to Mylene Villar of Procter and Gamble-Philippines customer service department, each bar should weigh 140 grams. "There's no way it could be short-weighted because every bar passes quality assurance standards before it is released to the market," she explained. Be that as it may, Villar advised J. Muzones to call up PG&P consumer action line for advice on how to file the complaint. The telephone numbers are 7938800, 7938395, 7938613.

Villar gave the following consumer tips: "Keep the wrapper or package of our products and note down the batch code and code date. In case the wrapper is damaged or lost, we will need the codes. We also have to retrieve the product in its original form so we can have it tested and analyzed at the quality assurance department."

E-mail the author at mgiron@i-manila.com.ph

More teppanyaki luncheon sets offered

DINING OUT

KIMPURA Japanese Restaurant introduces five new luncheon sets called More Teppanyaki's Best. Set 1 consists of beef roll and oysters; Set 2: *lapu-lapu* fillet, cuttlefish and tofu steak; Set 3: blue marlin, chicken and oysters; Set 4: sukiyaki steak and mixed tempura; Set 5: blade steak and prawns. All sets are served with kobachi, fried or steamed rice, asparagus or bean sprouts, *miso* soup and dessert. Kimpura is located at 2/L, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati (8932307, 8924456) and Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan (7218816, 7218869).

CHATEAU 1771, Portico 1771 and Sentro 1771 welcome the Christmas season with its traditional *bibingka* and *puto bumbong*. The *puto bumbong* and *bibingka* are best enjoyed with hot coffee, Spanish hot chocolate or aromatic tea brews. Chateau 1771 is located at El Pueblo Real de Manila, ADB Ave. cor J. Vargas Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Call 6317340. Portico 1771 is located at 1771 M. Adriatico St., Malate, Manila. Call 5232063. Sentro 1771 is located at the 2/L, Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 7573940.

PIZZA Hut introduces Chicken Relleno Pizza, with toppings of chicken, sweet sausage, fresh bell pepper and olives with tomato cream sauce. Have your money's worth with Dine in Feast for Four that includes a Chicken Relleno Family Pan Pizza, two spaghetti with meat sauce, eight pieces BBQ breadsticks, a pitcher of Pepsi Blue and free four pieces of Swirl tumblers all for P499. Call 9111111.

MANDARIN Oriental Manila's Paseo Uno introduces Merienda Cena. Offered on weekends at 3-5 p.m., the buffet offers mini brezels with chicken pastrami, brioche with tuna salad, club sandwiches, assorted maki and California rolls, noodles like *pancit canton*, *sotanghon guisado*, *pancit* Malabon, tropical fruits, native desserts such as *puto*, cassava cake, *ube* cake, buko pie and *guinatan halo-halo* and tropical fruit salad. Call 7508888.

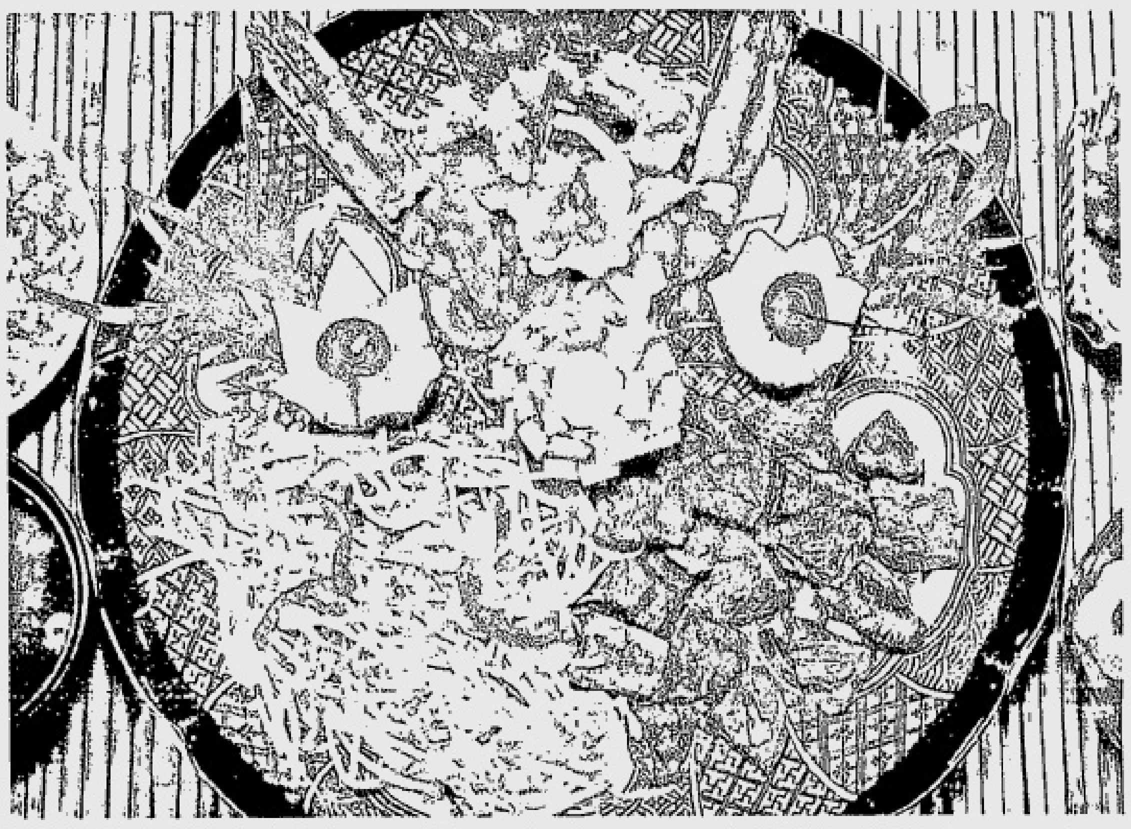
EDSA Shangri-La's Nishiki features the Amadai Festival until today. Called the "clown of the sea," the *amadai* (tilefish) is offered as sashimi, served with mango sauce or brown *soba*, grilled with sea urchin and Japanese *miso*, steamed with tofu and mushroom *ponzo* sauce, grilled with asparagus and seaweed stock. Hotel's Paparazzi offers an Italian lunch buffet of smoked salmon, tiger prawns with bacon, duck breast carpaccio with citrus salad, squid with capponata, bruschetta with eggplant and cheese, shrimps on parsley salad, four cheese pizza, roast beef or salmon carvery and a pasta station. Call 6347373, 6338888.

MANILA Pavilion Hotel's The Rotisserie presents two sets of menu that include Veloute of Pumpkin Soup with Parmesan Cheese Stick, Traditional Roast Turkey, Apple Crunch Pie with vanilla sauce or Mixed Greens served with grilled autumn vegetables, Braised Turkey Ragout and Bittersweet Chocolate Pyramid with fresh berry sauce. The Thanksgiving dinner is ongoing until Nov. 28. At Café Coquilla, dine on pumpkin soups, beef and pork meat loaves and apple pies until today.

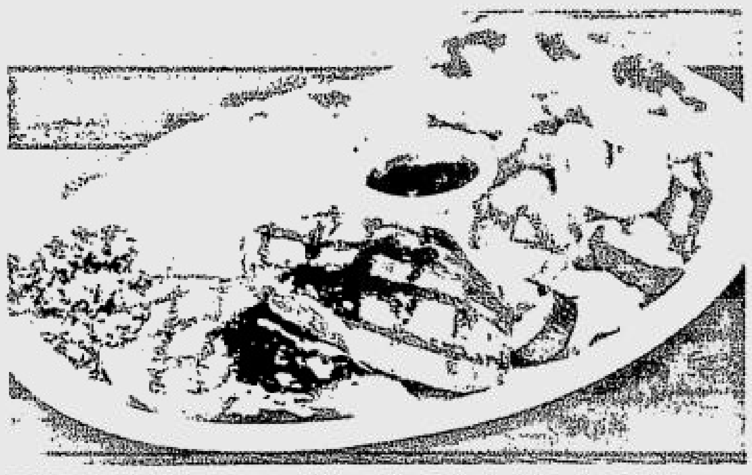
DISCOVERY Suites' Café Berrio celebrates Thanksgiving with a lunch buffet today, 12 noon-2:30 p.m. The restaurant offers Cured Salmon with red onion and capers, Shrimp and Zucchini Salad, Assorted Seafood with gruyere cheese gratinee, Roast Turkey, Apple Butter Pudding, Ginger Bread Cheesecake and Festive Apricot Bars. Call 6352222.

THE WESTIN Philippine Plaza's Café Plaza presents the French Food Festival until Nov. 29. Featured are desserts, cheese, Charcuterie (ham, salami, sausages), oysters, confit of duck, pate, bouillabaisse, sweet crepes. Call 5515555.

POPEYES Chicken and Biscuits features the Chick n' Strip Sandwich, which has chicken strips served on bread dressed with lettuce, pickles and mayonnaise. Popeyes is located at SM Southmall, Robinsons Metro East, New Farmers Plaza, Robinsons Galleria, Filinvest Festival Mall-Alabang, Greenhills Shopping Center, SM Bicutan, Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center and SM Pampanga.

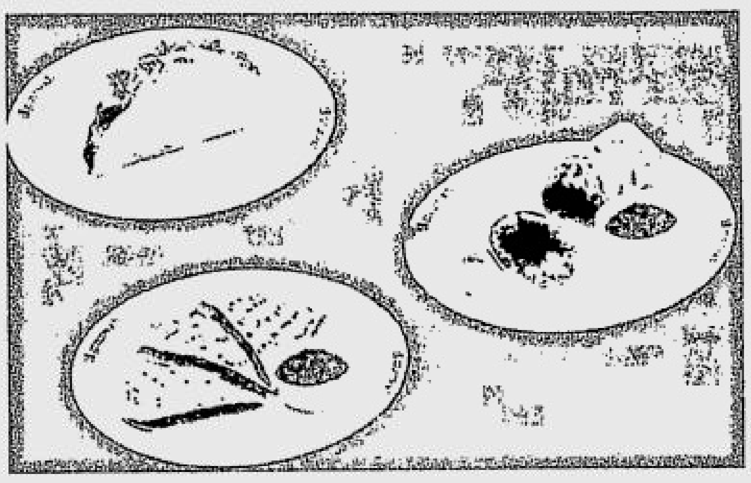


KIMPURA's Set 5 lunch deal offers top blade steak and prawns served with kobachi, fried beansprouts, miso soup and dessert.



TGI Friday'S offers menu additions like Spicy Jack Daniels Grill's chicken, pork chop, salmon and ribs that are basted with special spices, Tabasco and Tennessee whiskey. TGI Friday's branches are located at Glorietta 3, Robinsons Place Manila, Alabang Town Center, Hotel Rembrandt, QC and The Brickroad in Sta. Lucia East.

GERRY'S Grill features sizzling *sisig*, *kare-kare*, seafood specialties, crispy crablets, crispy *pata*, *inihaw na pusit*, crispy *buntot ng tanigue*, richly seasoned chicken spiced up with secret flavors and seafood *pinaputok*. Call 4211111.



GREENWICH presents Fiesta Mexican—Burrito Mio, tortilla wrapped around Mexican rice, taco beef, beans, tomatoes and lettuce with mayo dressing; Taco Ole, a crunchy shell stuffed with taco beef, onions, tomatoes, taco sauce, lettuce and cheese; and the famous Pizzadilla.

Salads and cheeses coming up!

TRENDIEST Salad Dressing first place winners Corazon Filarmeo and Paolo Lagniton

From page E1

The aunt-and-nephew team won P10,000 and gift packs.

Their salad concoction included pomelo, carrots, plum, *singkamas*, red cabbage, lettuce, onion leeks, peanuts, sesame seeds, mustard, sesame oil, honey, hoisin sauce and Alaska crema.

Second place went to the mother-and-daughter team of Ma. Cristina and Ariana Patawaran for their "Ensalada Angeleña." The dressing included white cheese, cream, salted egg and paco. They won P7,000 and gift packs.

Ruby Ana Victoriano and 2-year-old daughter Angelica bagged the third place with their entry "Shrimp and Crab Meat with Filipino Fruits," which had shrimp, crabmeat, melon, mango, banana, cream, Philadelphia cream, cheese, *nata de coco* and fried *lumpia* wrapper. They pocketed P5,000 and gift packs.

The 5th Asian Ethnic Food Fest is an annual event organized by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions of the Department of Trade and Industry.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

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QUEZO de Bola Platter first prize winners Noel Basa and Engelbert Guivencan

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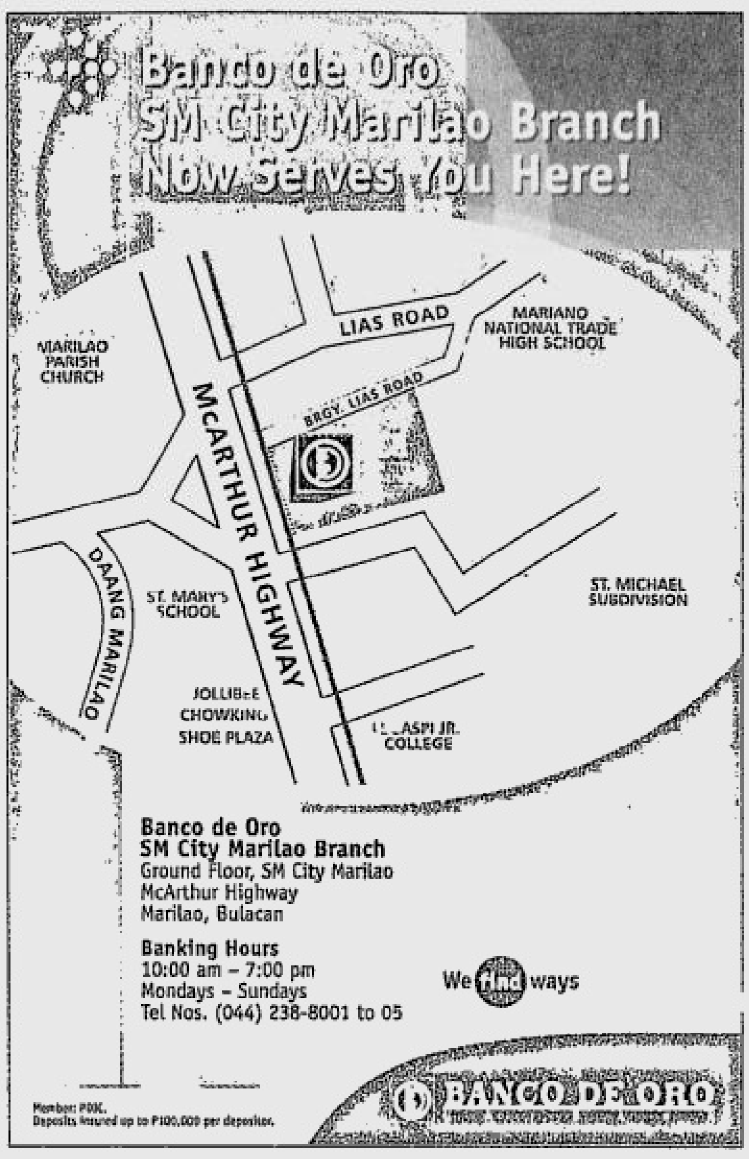
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Why aren't we all exuding boundless energy? Why is our potential energy far greater than our actual energy? Perhaps William James said it best when he said, "Compared to what we ought to be, most of us are only half awake! We are making use of only a small fraction of our possible mental and physical resources."

With high levels of energy, everybody including professional office workers, mature adults and athletes can live each day to the fullest. If our bodies can sustain a high level of energy each day, we will be able to maintain our competitive edge or a high level of performance and meet the challenge of modern living - High energy for fuller life!

The basic unit of fuel for the body is calories. The body needs a specific amount of food to meet its daily energy or caloric requirements. Besides food, the body needs "energy vitamins" such as Vitamins C and B-complex. The synergy of Vitamins C and B-complex is needed in the breakdown of chemicals absorbed from food (proteins, carbohydrates and fats) into fuel or energy utilized by the cells to support processes vital for life.

It's no wonder that there are hundreds of energy bars and energy drinks on the market. Many of us are searching for energy but we're searching the wrong places.

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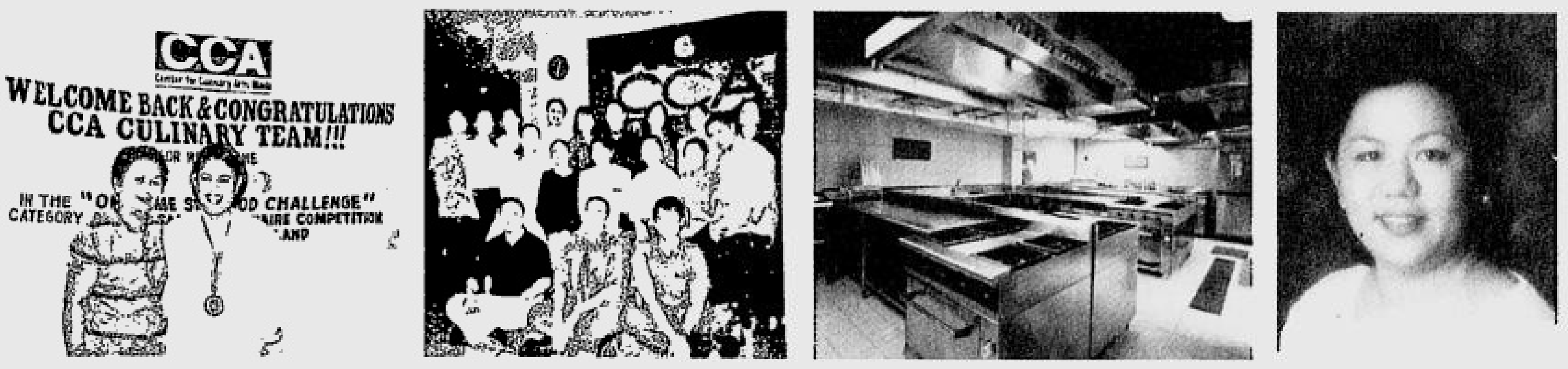
ADVT

Cheers to Seven Years!

CCA, Manila Celebrates it's 7th Year Anniversary


CCA
WELCOME BACK & CONGRATULATIONS
CCA CULINARY TEAM!!!
IN THE "ON THE SPOT SEAFOOD CHALLENGE" CATEGORY
COMPETITION

Left to right:
Susana "Annie P. Guerrero, CCA, Manila President with CCA student Lally Comia, Salon Culinaire's gold winner; One of CCA's equipped laboratories; Marinela Guerrero Trinidad - Vice President of Finance and General Manager of The Cravings Group.

On 27 November 2003, the Center for Culinary Arts, Manila (CCA) will mark its 7th anniversary with a grand open house at its campus in 287 Katipunan Avenue, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, beside Cravings. CCA, Manila proudly celebrates 7 achievements on its 7th anniversary as well.

The Programs

The school has consistently revitalized its programs with more current courses based on industry needs and trends. CCA, Manila offers 2 core programs, a 2-year diploma course in Culinary Arts & Technology Management and a 1-year certificate course in Baking & Pastry Arts. In fact, applications for the January 2004 batch are still being accepted.

Recently, CCA, Manila also developed an entrepreneurship course with the Asian Institute of Management, Venture Into Entrepreneurship in the Food Industry or VIE. This is a 6-month program culminating in actual business plans for starting up a food operation. This program has now been integrated with the diploma and certificate programs as a course alternative to the Pro-Management Module, geared to managerial development in a corporate setting.

The school also offers short courses on weekends through its Continuing Education Program for housewives, working individuals and part-time students. The last short courses for this year are slated for the weekend of 28 November 2004

CCA, Manila Partners

CCA, Manila is a partner school of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT), Canada's foremost educational institution for Culinary and Baking Arts. Through this partnership, Diploma program students may opt to take their 2nd year at NAIT, thereby receiving a CCA diploma and an internationally recognized NAIT diploma.

This year, the school announces another partnership with a leading hospitality school in Australia, Blue Mountain. Through this partnership, Diploma program students may pursue a Bachelor Degree in Hospitality Management with international recognition in just 18 months since the Diploma program courses at CCA, Manila will be fully credited.

Locally, Miriam College entrepreneurship students who wish to pursue the food service business have a specially designed culinary course program with CCA, Manila merged into their Bachelor Degree in Entrepreneurship. This shows that CCA, Manila is a recognized leader in culinary education, its core strength.

The Students

CCA, Manila prides itself in getting students who are truly devoted to a culinary career. As part of the applications, students go though a 2-day hands-on Discovery Course. This will give them a practical view of what to expect from a culinary education and profession.

The student population comes from diverse backgrounds including high school graduates, college transferees, housewives, entrepreneurs, and professionals seeking career shifts. For students needing financial assistance, the Culinary Education Foundation (CEF) was established to provide full and partial scholarships to deserving individuals. Surprisingly, the ratio of male and female students is 1 to 1, contrary to public perception.

In 2003, the school already has over 250 students in the Diploma & Certificate programs alone, having garnered its biggest enrolment for the Diploma program to date. This is a promising development because it can only lead to a continually flourishing food industry in the coming years.

The Faculty & Staff

To provide more personal instruction and support service to the growing student population, the school has augmented its pool of faculty and staff. CCA, Manila has hired more full-time faculty members and part-time chef instructors, all industry specialists.

Other key departments, namely the Human Resources and Public Relations Departments now have more staff to effectively implement action plans in time for the school's growth. To strengthen and update teaching methods and techniques, a faculty development program has also been initiated.

New Facilities

For its 7th year, the school constructed 6 additional kitchen laboratories and 1 beverage laboratory. By next year, CCA, Manila will fully operate 12 laboratories, 5 lecture rooms, a bigger information resource center and a computer room. These facilities will foster a more conducive environment to all methods of learning including research, lectures and practical application.

Awards & Accolades

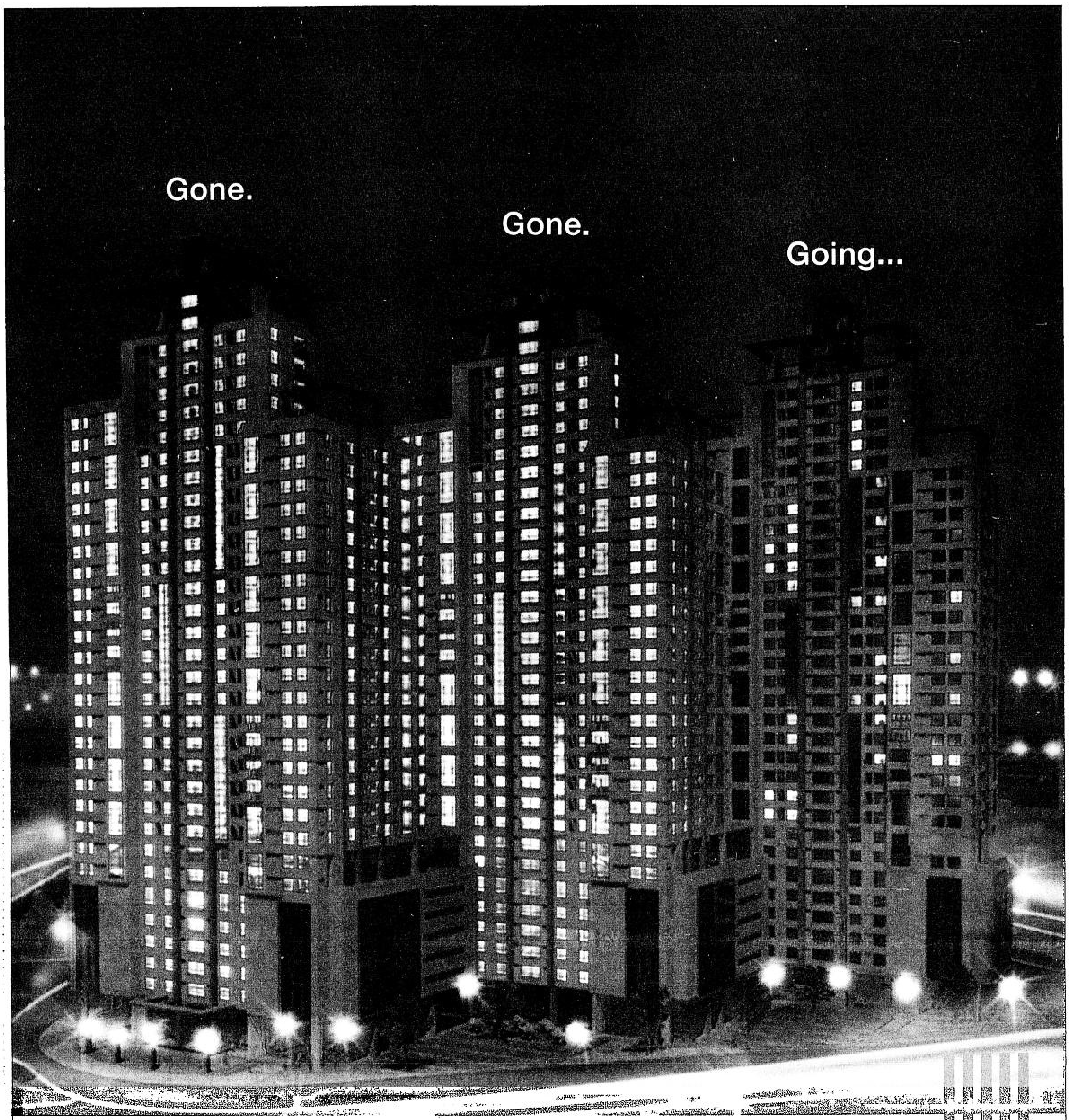
Last September 2003, the school garnered its first international victory, a gold medal in Salon Culinaire Competition held in Bangkok. Ms. Lally Comia, a student of the 2-year diploma program, won the prize in the seafood category. Locally, CCA, Manila students figure prominently in competitions organized by Chefs on Parade and TESDA.

Current Activities

This school year will witness many new things for CCA, Manila. To name a few, the school will publish a cookbook and launch an herb garden club. Indeed, exciting activities are underway. Learn more about CCA, Manila by attending their school open house on November 27. Join the faculty, staff and special guests in celebrating 7 Years of Cheers while looking forward to more culinary milestones ahead.

For inquiries, please contact the CCA, Manila Marketing Department by email, marketing@cca-manila.com or by telephone, 4264837.

Advt.



Tower 1 and Tower 2 have enjoyed a quick sell-out. The great news is, we're opening up Tower 3 to buyers! Here's your last chance to live just a few steps from your work, shopping, and hang-out places. THE COLUMNS, Ayala Avenue is rising right at the corner of Ayala and Sen. Gil Puyat Avenues, the ideal address for young, urban achievers who want to live just a few steps from everything.

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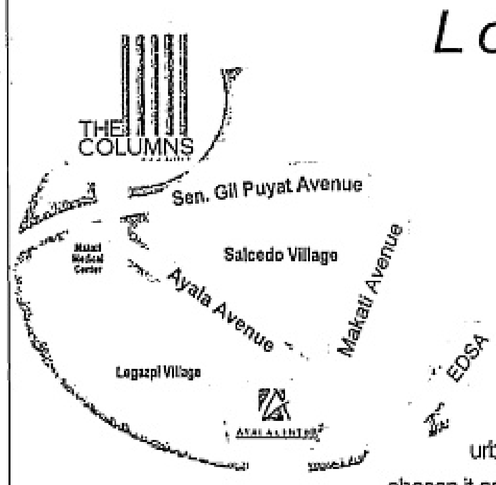


Strategically situated at the corner of Ayala Avenue and Sen. Gil J. Puyat Avenue (Buendia), The Columns, Ayala Avenue, Community Innovations Inc.'s landmark development, has come to redefine urban living. Many have already chosen it as their city address, attracted by its combination of convenience, relaxation, and prestige.

It's the ideal first home for young urban achievers who want to live a few steps from everything. Now, with Tower 3 opening for sale, it's also the last chance to embrace The Columns experience.

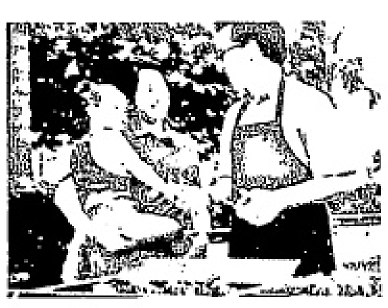
Garden in the City

At The Columns, Ayala Avenue, nature communes with urban living. Its open design creates a relaxing environment both in the towers and on the ground. The green Zen-like gardens that adorn the Grand Lobbies of the three towers soothe residents and guests alike.

In the Towers

Each tower offers thirty storeys, twenty-three residential floors, rising on a continuous seven-story podium. The towers are angled to catch bright morning sunshine and avoid afternoon heat. Studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units offer maximized space for the urban lifestyle, with plentiful natural light and ventilation—a prized rarity in residential condos. Splendid views stretch from the Makati skyline to Manila Bay, and selected units on each floor offer bay windows and balconies.

The Columns Experience



By integrating its amenities with its entire lifestyle, The Columns transforms itself into a relaxing refuge that openly encourages the feeling of a real neighborhood. At the seventh floor of the podium, The Recreational Club spans all three towers, and serves as the club and meeting place for this vertical village. Two pools, a fitness center, a game room, function halls, a broad outdoor patio, and a day care center and playground fit the needs of every Columns resident. A jogging path and barbecue areas offer features uncommon to condos. It's all about creating community.

The Ground Floor of The Columns offers outdoor cafes and dining spots clustered around three landscaped plazas. With its quaint shops and al fresco lifestyle, the Ground Floor aims to be a destination in itself at its end of Ayala Avenue.

Live a few steps from everything. For young, dynamic, and energetic individuals, The Columns, Ayala Avenue offers it all: location, quality, reputation, and prestige. It's a chance that's not to be missed. Tower 3 sales are now open.

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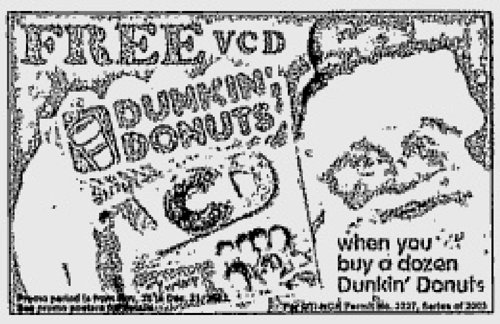

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CRUNCHY Roll
(Tempura in Sushi,
P140)

Japanese, in a different light

Story on page F2

Osake offers interesting rice rolls in addition to the traditional sashimi, sukiyaki and tempura

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ERNEST REYNOSO GALA
Graduate: Full course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Studied at Chopstick and Hong Kong Town Gas Culinary Schools

Leni Reynoso-Arcilla
Masters in Cake Decorating, Wilton School, Chicago, U.S.A.,1974 under Martha and Stanley Wilton. Graduate: Chicago School of Cooking and Catering. Graduate: Full Course, Thai Cooking School at the Oriental Hotel, Bangkok. Studied cooking in Europe, South America and Hong Kong. Co-Founder with Edna, Reynoso Cooking and Baking School, March 1963.

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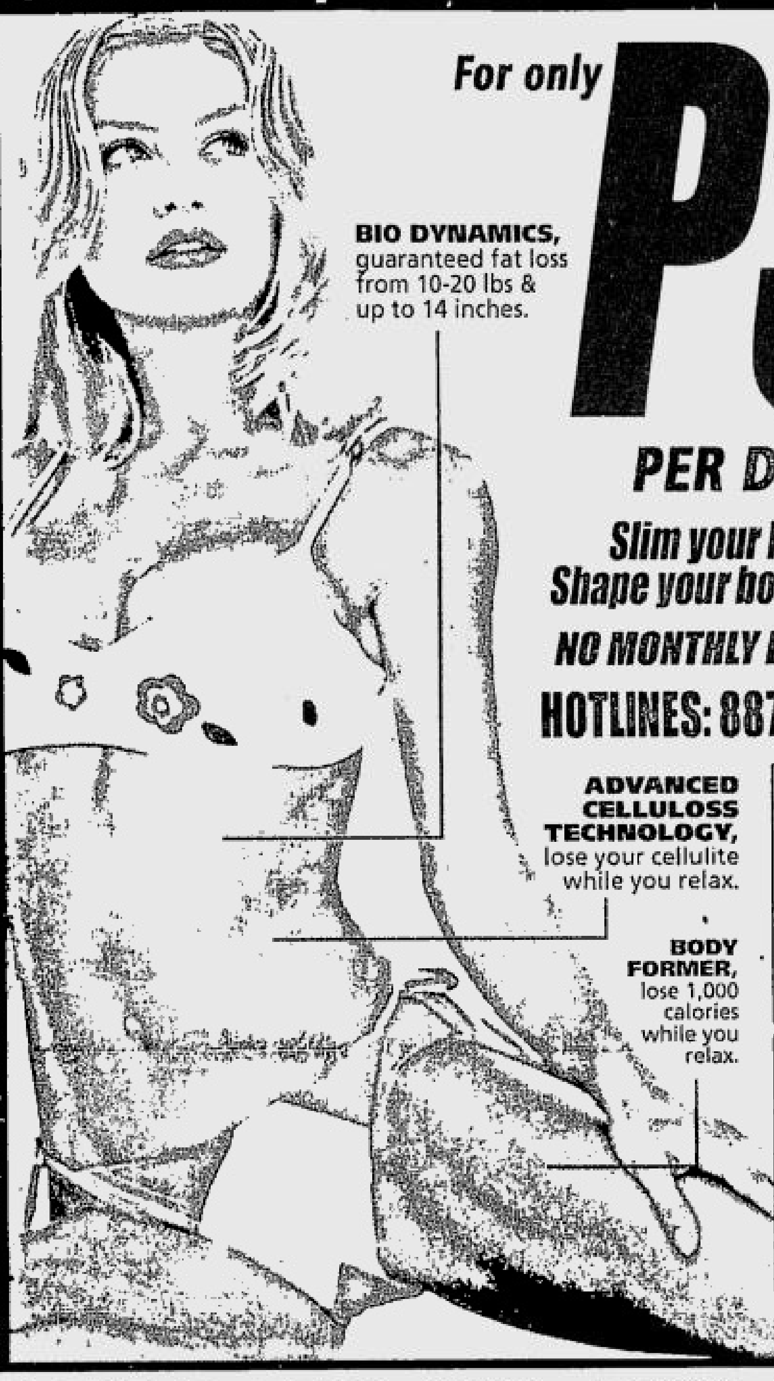

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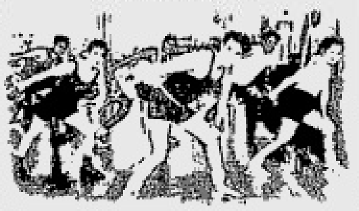

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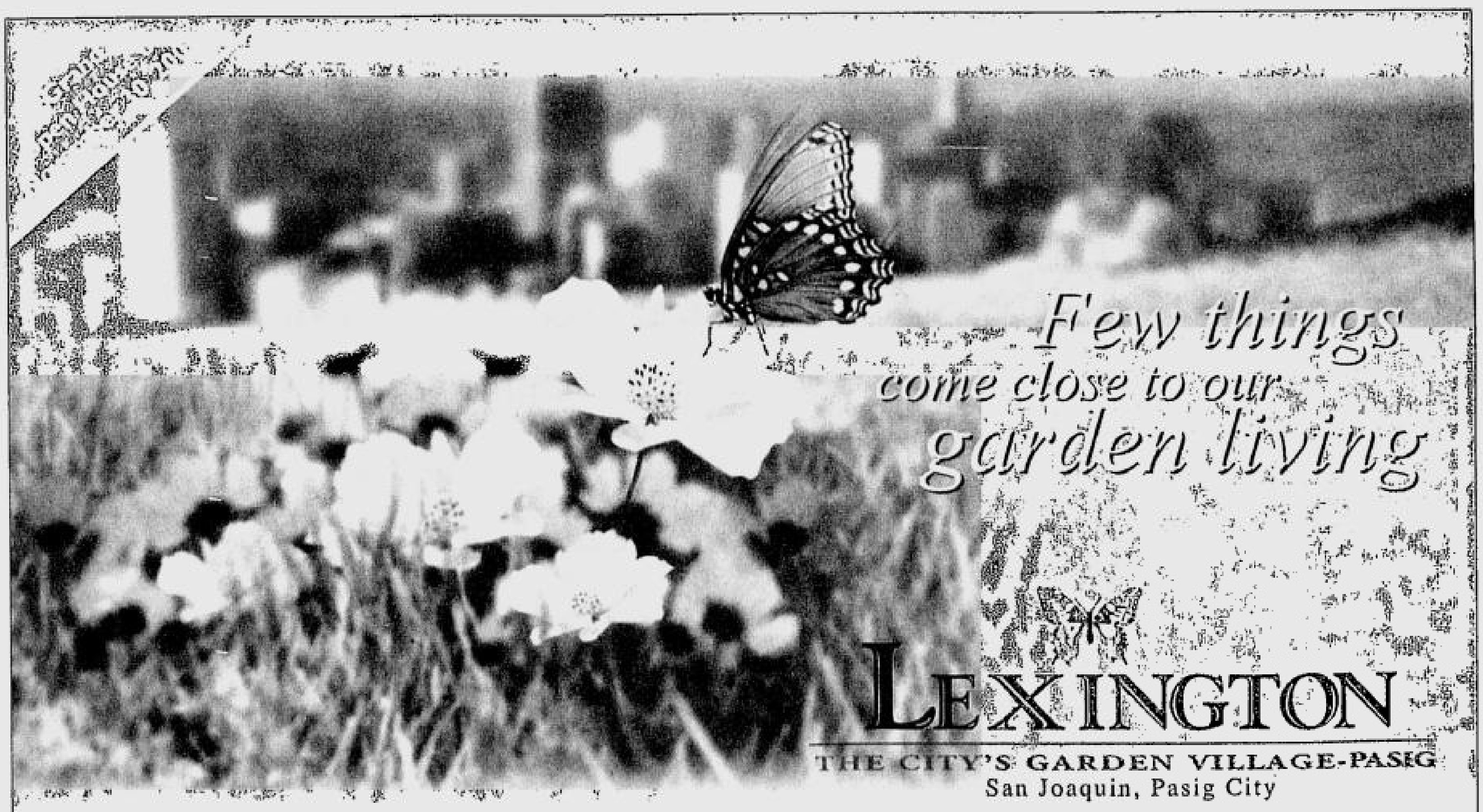

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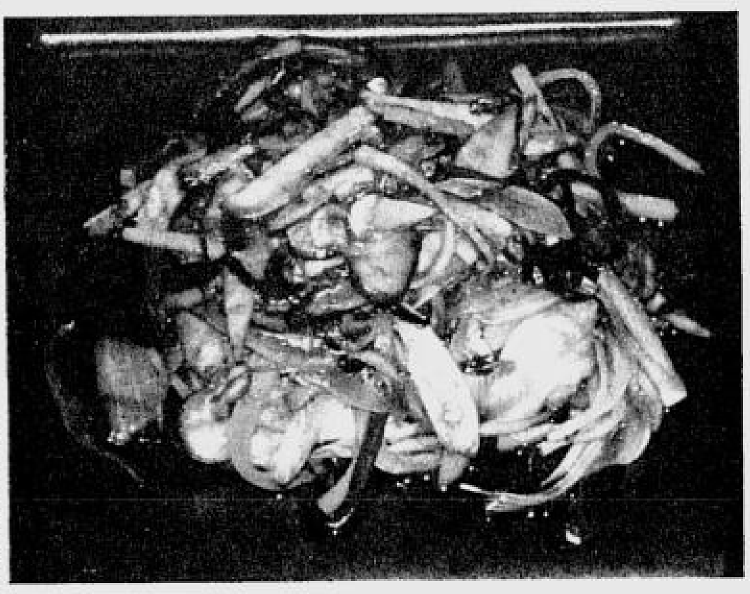
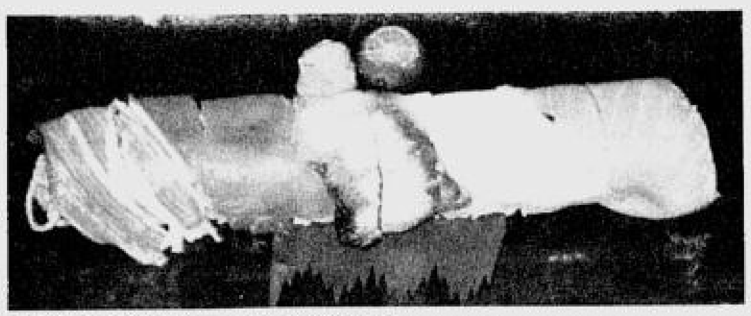
Japanese, in a different light

NAGISA (Fish fillet in tartar), P150



TOFU Steak, P80



RAINBOW Roll (Hawaii's original roll with different colors of sashimi), P150

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Rudy Esperas

AROUND here, Japanese food has appeared in many incarnations. Sometimes, it accents a culinary concept or flies solo as traditional dishes are reinterpreted by the chef's training and background.

"This is more interesting to us as restaurant owners, and people seem to be more open to trying different things," says Ricco Ocampo, co-owner with Rikki Dee and designer of the interiors of both the 60-seater Osake at Glorietta and the 45-seater Megamall branch.

Osake's prevailing culinary philosophy is one of simplicity. On the menu itself, the chief component of each dish is highlighted.

"The main ingredient is meant to be readily apparent," Ocampo says. "The menu is somewhat minimalist."

Even the name Osake, which reflects Dee's passion for sake (Japanese rice wine) seems to capture the theme of simplicity.

Value for money

Osake serves value-for-money meals that are traditionally Japanese, Ocampo says. "Osake's wide array of dishes gives diners more reason to visit a Japanese restaurant. It educates them about other Japanese treats they can try."

Two Japanese chefs helped Ocampo and Dee in the research and development of Osake's menu. Aside from Nabemono (hot pot cooking), Wan Mono (soup), Sarada (salad), Sashimi, Sushi, Maki, Temaki, Tsukuru Bento, Ippin Ryori (a la carte dishes), Agemono (fried items), Robatayaki (grilled fare), Donburi (rice toppings), Menrui (noodles) and desserts, the restaurant also serves House Specials, which have been inspired by Dee's annual trips to Hawaii. These are Musabi Roll, Salmon Skin Roll, Rainbow Roll, Dynamite Spicy Tuna Roll, Crunchy Roll, Spider Roll and Dragon Roll. It also offers the Chef's Special, Tai Kabutoni (*lapu-lapu* head with sweet ginger sauce) and Okonomiyaki, Japanese pizza made of vegetables and kani.

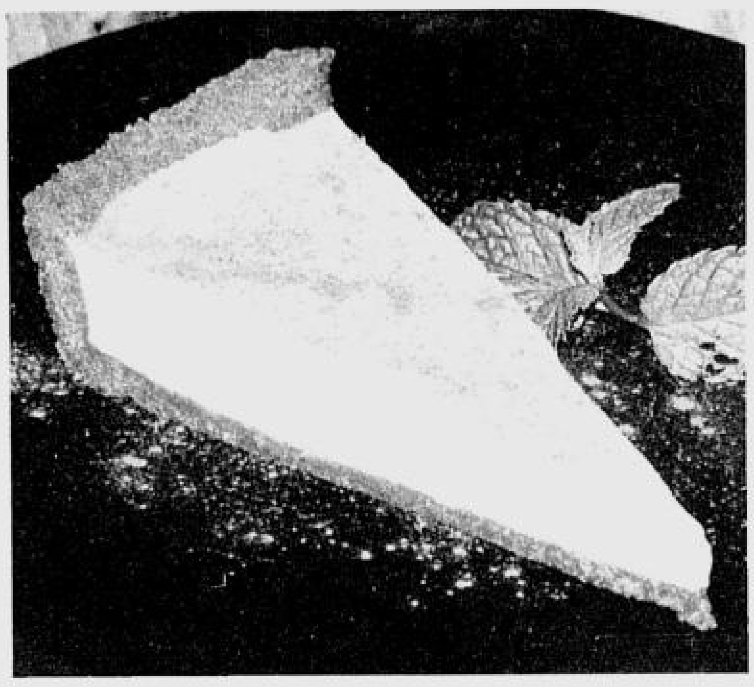
Osake's drinks, of course, revolve around Infused Sake: Saketini (Sake Martini), Sake Rita (Sake Margarita), Sake Driver (Sake Screwdriver), Bloody Sake (Sake Bloody Mary) and Cosmo Sake (Sake Cosmopolitan) which are served either at room temperature or chilled.

"Serving sake warm, however, is no longer the norm. In Japan, when it's cold outside they heat up sake to warm you up and when it's hot they serve it cold," Ocampo says.

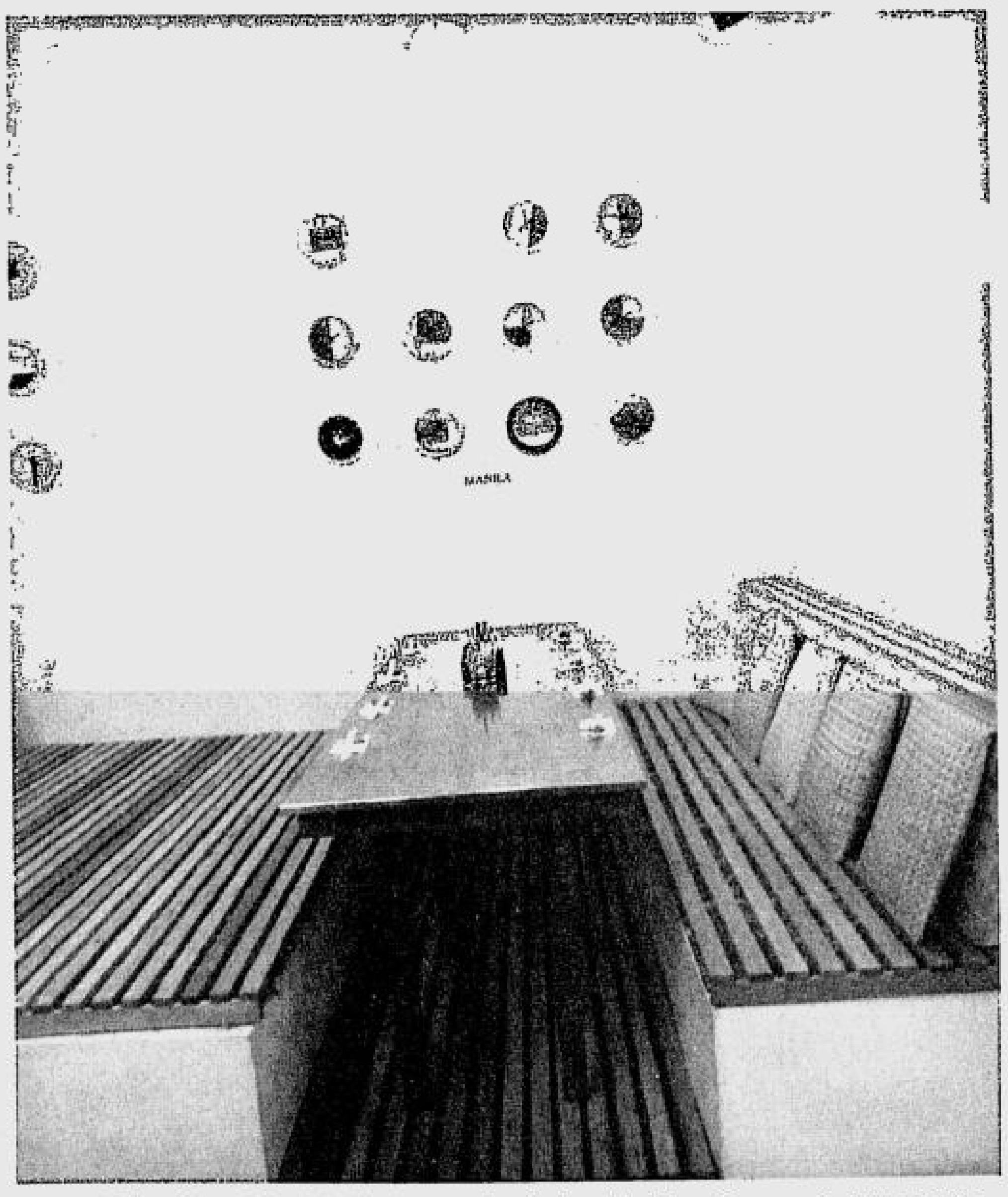
He adds that Osake is their way of presenting Japanese cuisine in a different light. "We don't want diners to take Japanese eating too seriously. It should be fun, especially with its price points."

Osake at Glorietta 2, Restaurant Row, Ayala Center, Makati (tels. 7528586/7528590) is open daily, 11 a.m.-2 p.m., 6-11 p.m., and on weekends, until midnight. Osake at SM Mega Strip, Building B, Mandaluyong (6378025) is open during mall hours.

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph



GREEN Tea Cheesecake, P50



THE MOD interiors of Osake's Glorietta outlet, designed by Ricco Ocampo, feature accents collected from the Asian travels of his wife Tina, and wall clocks by Rock Drilon.

CREATIVELY designed sake bottles from Ricky Dee's trips to Japan

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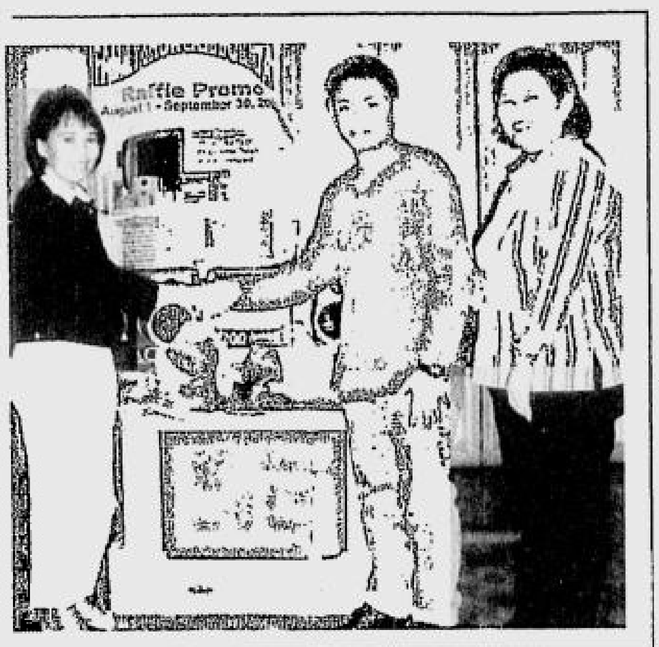
CABALEN, an eat-all-you-can-eat-all-you-want restaurant, recently celebrated 16 glorious years in the food business with its annual anniversary raffle promo. The grand prize was an entertainment showcase consisting of a 29" Philips colored TV, Philips home theater and component system. Photo shows the grand prize winner, Gilbert Dungca of Las Piñas, with Cabalen control and compliance manager Pearl T. Galicano and Cabalen operations manager Consuelo H. Reyes.



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Quick n' Easy
GREAT

Hassle-free potluck recipes for holidays

By Dorothy MJ Ferreria
Contributor

WE are nearing the season of office parties, family reunions and potlucks. For most of us, it is always a problem to decide what to cook and serve. Here we have hassle-free recipes festively appropriate for such occasions—beef pot roast, turbo chicken and simple bread pudding with a twist. Serve these with plain rice, instant soup and green salad.

Beef Kalitiran in Classic Brown Sauce

1 whole piece of beef chuck (*kalitiran*), approx. 1.2 kg
¼ c dark rum or brandy
¼ c soy sauce
¼ c olive oil or corn oil
¼ c minced garlic
1 c chopped onions
½ c chopped tomatoes
black pepper to taste
1 pc bay leaf (laurel)
4 c water
Brown sauce:
¼ c butter
¾ c thinly sliced canned button mushrooms
¼ c all-purpose flour
2 c strained cooking liquid
salt and pepper to taste
Side dish:
½ kg potatoes
¼ c softened butter
2 tbsp chopped spring onions
salt and pepper to taste

Marinade the beef in soy sauce and rum for an hour. Drain for at least 15 minutes and reserve the marinade for later use.

Heat up the oil in a stockpot. Add the beef, and brown on both sides. Remove the meat and set aside. Using the same pan, sauté the garlic, onions and tomatoes until the vegetables turn limp. Pour in the reserved marinade, the pepper, bay leaf and water. Allow to boil, scraping the bottom of the pan from time to time to loosen brown bits.

Transfer the meat and the liquid to a pressure cooker. Allow to cook for 20 minutes. Start timing as soon as the cooker starts to make noise. Allow the pressure cooker to cool down before opening. Remove the meat and slice into serving portions. Strain the liquid and set aside 2 cups for the gravy.

If a pressure cooker is not available, use a large, heavy stockpot and allow to simmer for at least an hour or until tender. Add more water as necessary, half a cup at a time, making sure that the meat is always covered with liquid.

To prepare the gravy, melt the butter over low heat in a thick saucepan. Add the mushrooms and sauté for a few minutes until glossy. Stir in the flour. Pour in the strained liquid. Continue stirring until slightly thick.

To prepare the side dish, scrub the potatoes well. Cut into large chunks, leaving the skin on, for better appearance. Cook in slightly salted boiling water until tender. Drain. Transfer the potatoes to a mixing bowl. While the potatoes are hot, add the butter. Toss to blend and season with salt and pepper.

Roast Chicken with Citrus Glaze

1 whole chicken, approx. 1.2 kg
1 sachet instant *sinigang* mix
Citrus glaze:
¼ c orange marmalade or mango jam
1 tbsp soy sauce
2 tbsp *calamansi* juice
1 tbsp melted butter

Rub the cavity and the skin of the chicken with the *sinigang* mix. Let stand at room temperature for 15 minutes.

Place a wire rack in the center of a turbo broiler bowl. Place the chicken in the wire rack, breast side down. Set the turbo broiler at 350°F. Bake the chicken for 15 minutes. Invert the chicken and bake for another 15 minutes.

After a total of 30 minutes, baste the chicken with the glaze and continue to cook for about 15 minutes more, basting the chicken with the glaze every 5 minutes.

Pierce the chicken thigh with a fork to test for doneness. If the liquid that oozes out from the chicken is clear, then the chicken is done. If the color that oozes out is pinkish, continue to bake for another 5-10 minutes until the chicken is done.

To prepare the glaze, combine the ingredients in a small saucepan. Allow to boil for 5 minutes or until somewhat syrupy. Excess glaze may be used as a dipping sauce.

If desired, use a conventional gas/electric oven preheated at 350°F. Approximate baking time would be 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Coconut Bread Pudding

Pudding:
6 c cubed loaf bread
300 ml can full-cream condensed milk
370 ml can full-cream evaporated milk
4 whole eggs, graded extra large
1 c white sugar
1 tsp pure vanilla extract
½ c raisins
1 c desiccated coconut
1 c canned crushed pineapple, well drained
Bottom layer:
½ c softened butter
¼ c white sugar

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Potluck recipes for holidays

From page F3

¼ c desiccated coconut

¼ c canned crushed pineapple, well drained

Preheat the oven to 350°F.

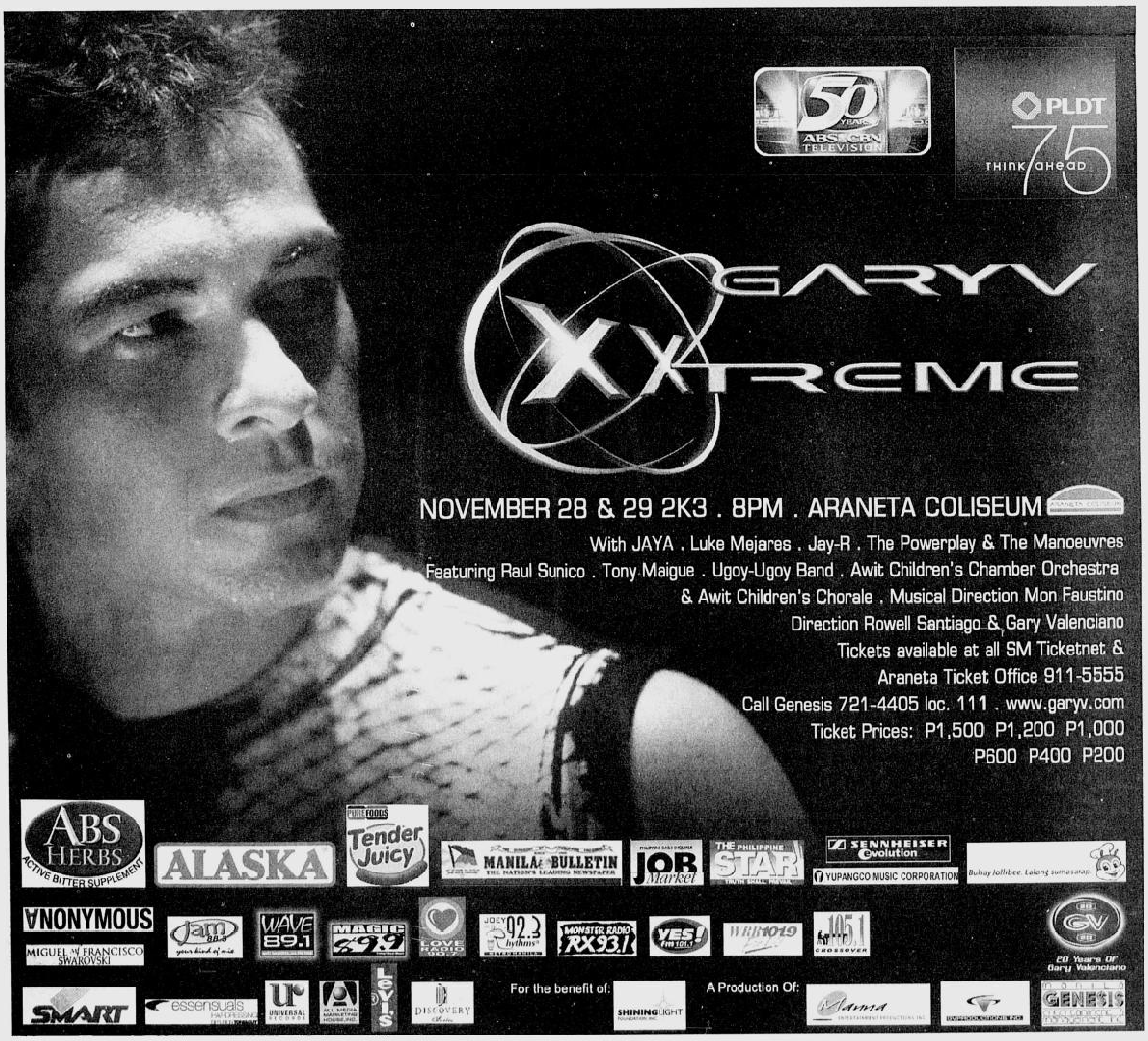
In a medium mixing bowl, combine the ingredients for the bottom layer. Divide the mixture into 2 equal portions and spread in the bottom of each loaf pan measuring 9 x 5 inches, 3-inches high. Set aside.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the ingredients for the pudding. Mix well with a wooden spoon. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking pans. Transfer the pans to a large rectangular pan half filled with hot water (*baine* Marie or *banyo ni* Maria).

Bake for 45 minutes or until a toothpick/cake tester inserted in the center comes out clean. For better flavor, it is always best to chill overnight before serving.

Dorothy MJ Ferreria offers cooking, baking and cake decorating classes at Dorothy's Cooking School in Quezon City. Call 7217735 or e-mail dorothycookingschool@yahoo.com.

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
MONDAY	Mushroom omelette Cheddar cheese *Pandesal* Coffee, chocolate or iced tea Ripe mangoes and yogurt	Instant cream of corn soup Roast chicken with citrus glaze Stir-fried *chicharo* Rice Canned peaches with ice	Pork *sinigang* with *kangkong* and *labanos* Rice Sweetened *garbanzos*
TUESDAY	Cornflakes and milk Pan-fried spam Loaf bread Coffee, chocolate or fruit juice Cucumber salad	*Daing na hito* Salted eggs and tomatoes Rice Fresh pineapple	*Pancit bihon gulsado* Fried chicken nuggets Flavor of the month ice cream
WEDNESDAY	*Ensaymada or mamon* Spicy Hungarian sausage Coffee, chocolate or iced tea Fresh fruit platter	Clear soup Korean beef steak Stir-fried mung bean sprouts (togue) Rice Fruit gelatin	Chicken *adobo* with pineapple chunks Vegetable chopsuey Rice Ripe mango with cottage cheese topping
THURSDAY	Hotcake or waffles Crispy bacon or *adobo* flakes Coffee, chocolate or fruit juice Bananas and yogurt	Spaghetti with meatballs Garlic bread Chocolate leche flan	Breaded fish fillet with sweet and sour sauce and veggies Rice Cold *taho*
FRIDAY	Rice Chicken *tocino* or *longganiza* Coffee, chocolate or iced tea Papaya with *calamansi*	Chicken *kare-kare* Rice Sweetened *saba* with *sago* and evap	Beef *kalitiran* in classic brown sauce Mashed potatoes or potato salad Mocha cake
SATURDAY	Coconut bread pudding Pan grilled ham Cheddar cheese Coffee, chocolate or carrot juice Tossed salad greens	Seafood paella *Lechon kawali* *Leche flan*	Fresh vegetable *lumpia* Grilled chicken Rice Fresh fruit platter
SUNDAY	Garlic rice Fried eggs Bottled *tuyo* Tomato salad with *wansoy* topping Coffee, chocolate or iced tea	Clam soup *Inihaw na pusit at tilapia* *Inihaw na porkchop* Rice *Halo-halo* bar	*Pesang bangus* with potatoes and *pechay* Rice Chilled *suha*



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